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**ABSTRACT**

Themes of the 23rd Annual International Association of School Librarianship conference included "Traditional Literacy," "The Current Status of Libraries," "Literacy in a Technological World," and "Preserving Cultural and Historical Literacy." The following papers were presented at the conference: (1) "Bunko: Private Mini-Libraries for Children in Japan," (Satoru Takeuchi); (2) "Literacy for the School Librarian," (Anna E. Altmann); (3) "The State of the World's School Libraries," (Diljit Singh); (4) "Young Adult Reading Habits in Ukraine," (Christine Sochocky); (5) "Literacy Without Libraries: Promoting Literacy Among School Children in Nigeria," (Virginia W. Dike); (6) "Picking a Winner: Children as Judges and Evaluators of Picture Books--the Irma S. and James H. Black Award," (Linda Greengrass); (7) "Libraries Alive: Promoting Libraries and Literature," (Suzette Boyd); (8) "A Transformation in Teacher Education: or How Can Disadvantaged Teachers Become Information Literate," (Sandra Olen); (9) "Using Editorial Cartoons in the Curriculum to Enhance Visual (and Political) Literacy," (Susan Steinfurst); (10) "Preschool Partnerships: School and Public Library Cooperation to Facilitate School Readiness," (Barbara Immroth and Viki Ash-Geisler); (11) "Enhancing Information Literacy Skills Across the Curriculum," (Marlene Giguere et al.); (12) "Curriculum-Enhanced MARC (CEMARC): A New Cataloging Format for School Librarians," (Catherine Murphy); (13) "Emerging Technologies: Applications and Implications for School Library Media Centers," (Kathleen W. Craver); (14) "Students Becoming Life-Long Users: Vision Becoming Reality," (Judith A. Garlow); (15) "Research in Teacher-Librarianship and the Institutionalization of Change," (Ken Haycock); (16) "Children's Literature and the Holocaust," (Martin Goldberg); (17) "The Selection, Evaluation, and Integration of Culturally Authentic Texts: A Case for Making the On-Line Catalog Reflect Parallel Culture," (Teri S. Lesesne and Sylvia Hall-Ellis); (18) "The Classroom Library Project in South Africa," (Sophia le Roux); (19) "Incorporating Oral History into the Curriculum," (Loriene Roy); (20) "Incorporating Oral History into the Curriculum: A Pathfinder," (Hilary Craiglow); (21) "Literacy and the Inner City Children," (Jack Stack); and (22) "Looking at Britain's National Curriculum for English: Promoting Long Established Children's Fiction and Stories from a Variety of Cultures and Traditions," (Helga B. Visscher). (SWC)

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## 23rd Annual Conference

# INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANSHIP

## SELECTED PAPERS



SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

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# **LITERACY: TRADITIONAL, CULTURAL, TECHNOLOGICAL**

**Selected Papers from the 23rd Annual Conference  
International Association of School Librarianship**

**School of Library and Information Science  
University of Pittsburgh  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

**International Association of School Librarianship  
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## Preface

All presenters at the 23rd Annual Conference of the International Association of School Librarianship were invited to submit written copies of their remarks to be published as selected papers. All papers that were submitted to the organizing committee for consideration have been included in this publication. Selection of papers is based upon the following criteria:

- Applies to the conference theme
- Integrates with other papers on the conference theme
- Presents information applicable to a large percentage of association members
- Is well written
- Presents *new* information or information new to association members
- Adheres to proposed length
- Unique information
- Represents a wide variety of countries.

Papers are lightly edited for punctuation, clarity, grammar, and spelling by the committee members who forward their suggestion to the chair of the committee who is responsible for the final copy. This year the organizing committee served as the editorial committee.

Donald C. Adcock  
Chair

# IASL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

## World Book International Keynote Address and Reception

Literacy: Tradition and Innovation (Keynote address sponsored by World Book International) ..... Lillian Gerhardt

## Traditional Literacy

The Power of Reading (Keynote)..... Dr. Stephen Krashen

Bunko: Private Mini-Libraries for Children in Japan ..... Dr. Satoru Takeuchi

Literacy for the School Librarian ..... Dr. Anna E. Altmann

The State of the World's School Libraries ..... Dr. Diljit Singh

Young Adult Reading Habits in Ukraine ..... Christine Sochocky

School Libraries in the World: Project of the IFLA Section of School Libraries ..... Dr. Paulette Bernhard

Literacy without Libraries: Promoting Literacy Among School Children in Nigeria ..... Virginia W. Dike

Picking a Winner: Children as Judges and Evaluators of Picture Books-- The Irma S. and James H. Black Book Award ..... Linda Greengrass

Why Storytelling in Today's World? ..... David Titus

Association Conferences: Planning and Implementation (Workshop) ..... Sally Myers

Writing for Publication (Workshop) ..... Dr. Blanche Woolls

## The Current Status of Literacy

Information Literacy: Research in the School Library (Keynote) ..... Dr. Celeste DiCarlo Nalwasky

Count on Reading: A Reading Initiative ..... Dr. David V. Loertscher

Librarians Alive: Promoting Libraries and Literature ..... Suzette Boyd

Transforming Teacher Education: Using the Project as a Vehicle to Improve Teachers' Information Literacy ..... Dr. Sandra Olen

Using Editorial Cartoons in the Curriculum to Enhance Visual (and Political) Literacy ..... Dr. Susan Steinfurst

Preschool Partnerships: School and Public Library Cooperation to Facilitate School Readiness ..... Dr. Barbara Immroth and Viki Ash-Geisler



An Information Literacy Model: Helping Students to Become Life-long Library Users .....	Dr. Marlene Giguere, Dr. Anne M. Galler, and Dr. Joanne Locke
Library Power: A Cleveland Success Story .....	Vivian Melton

## **Literacy in a Technological World**

New Technologies and You (Keynote) .....	Dr. Joseph Marrone
Focus on the Learner: Technology with a Purpose .....	Dr. Dan Fuller and Theresa Bruner
Curriculum Enhanced MARC (CEMARC): A New Cataloging Format For School Librarians .....	Dr. Catherine Murphy
Using the Internet: An Introductory Demonstration .....	Carrie Gardner
Emerging Technologies: Applications and Implications for School Library Media Centers .....	Dr. Kathleen Craver
Students Becoming Life-long Library Users: Vision Becoming Reality .....	Judith A. Garlow
The Two Sides of Television .....	Sandra L. Pezzino
Research in Teacher-Librarianship and the Institutionalization of Change .....	Dr. Ken Haycock
Research in Progress .....	Molly Kinney, Sharon Marrs, and Tom Wall

## **Preserving Cultural & Historical Literacy**

Keynote Panel .....	Dr. Pauletta B. Bracy, Dr. Elizabeth F. Howard, and Dr. Lorie Roy
Children's Literature and the Holocaust .....	Martin Goldberg
The Selection, Evaluation, and Integration of Culturally Authentic Texts: A Case for Making the Online Catalog Reflect Parallel Cultures .....	Dr. Sylvia Hall-Ellis and Dr. Teri Lesesne
Celebrating the Anishinabe (Ojibwa/Chippewa) Culture .....	Dr. Pauletta B. Bracy
The Classroom Library Project in South Africa .....	Sophia Le Roux
Resources for Teaching about the Holocaust .....	Barbara Nosanchuk and Barbara Appelbaum
Incorporating Oral History into the Curriculum .....	Dr. Lorie Roy
Literacy and the Inner-City Child .....	Jack Stack
Looking at Britain's National Curriculum for English: Promoting Long Established Children's Fiction and Stories from a Variety of Cultures and Traditions .....	Helga B. Visscher

# **Bunko: Private Mini-Libraries for Children in Japan**

by

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University of Library and Information Science

Tsukuba, Japan

## **1. WHAT IS A BUNKO?**

### **1.1 A Private Mini-library for Children**

In Japan, there has been a nationwide parents' volunteer activity since the late 1960s called the "*Bunko*". A bunko is a local mini-library for children operated voluntarily by a private individual, or a group of parents, to nurture children's reading interest by offering them an inviting reading environment. The total number of bunko in Japan in 1993 is estimated to be about 4,000, from a survey conducted by librarians including the present writer.

### **1.2 Adult Bunko Member(s)**

The total number of adult bunko members is estimated to be about 32,000, with 90% female. The largest age groups are the thirties (43.5%) and forties (31.8%). Most adult members are mothers whose children have grown up, leaving them free time to volunteer. Adult members share such characteristics as: (1) they love reading, especially children's books, (2) they regard the lifelong reading habit as a good means to build children's personal character, and (3) they want to share the joys of reading not only with their own children but also with other children in the community. Moreover, bunko members are motivated by the following social phenomena: (1) children's declining interest in reading, (2) people's increasing focus on seeking success in material terms, which tends to reduce interests in the beauty in human nature and in the natural environment, and (3) a strong emphasis on school education oriented toward preparation for entrance examinations for higher education. Adult bunko members felt that they had to do something for their children and for the community, and so they opened a bunko or joined bunko activities.

The bunko opens at least once a week, and each bunko group gets together at least once a month to discuss the operation of their bunko. Groups cooperate with other bunko to exchange experiences, study children's books, and promote the development of local children's reading interests. Public librarians also often cooperate with the bunko members. Where

there is no public library service, the local bunko strongly advocates developing the service to the local authorities. Quite a few bunko have succeeded in having new libraries established and in developing substantial library services.

### **1.3 Child Bunko Members**

Children of the community come to the bunko and register themselves as its members. More than 80% of bunko do not charge any membership fee; if any, the fee is nominal. Membership allows the child to borrow books and to participate in regular and occasional bunko activities.

Among the child members, the largest age group is 1-2 graders, followed by 3-4 graders, 4-6 year olds, 5-6 graders, and 0-3 year olds, in declining order. The ratio of male to female is 3:7. From secondary school (seventh grade) on, most children stop coming to the bunko. However, a few do come occasionally to read books, and talk with the adult members. In general, children say that they feel free from various pressures in the bunko, that it is "the healing place of their soul".

### **1.4 Bunko Holdings**

The total number of volumes held varies among bunko. Smaller bunko may have fewer than 100 books, while the largest collections may exceed 3,000. Individually operated bunko are usually based in a home, while group-operated bunko may be housed in a local meeting place, a kindergarten, a religious institution, etc. Some bunko have used retired and remodeled buses or trains, which children love. The larger the collection becomes, the harder it is to find a place for the bunko.

## **2. ACTIVITIES OF BUNKO TO ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO READ**

### **2.1 Book Selection**

The most important activity to promote reading is book selection. In Japan, around 2,900 titles of children's books are published each year. Adult members carefully examine the quality of books, considering the children's

interests in reading and their budget. The local public library also lends books out to the bunko, and the number of books and the length of the lending period ranges from twenty books for several weeks to six hundred for a three month period. These books are selected by adult bunko members.

Selecting books offers a good chance for the adults to study the contents of books, authors, book publishing and marketing, and their children's reading interests. Local librarians offer assistance in book selection and information about books and readers. Adults, in turn, offer to young librarians their knowledge, experience, and way of thinking as parents who read books together with children throughout their growth.

## **2.2 Direct Ways of Sharing the Joys of Reading**

Reading aloud, book talk, storytelling and displaying books are used to encourage children to read. Moreover, many bunko have adopted the method of "Reading Books by Parents and Children Together". Mother and child take turns reading. The practice works best if done at a designated time daily, e.g., before bed time or after dinner, etc., and if done constantly and continuously. (Cf., "Guidelines" and "Benefits" by Shogo Saitoh)

Reading aloud is felt by many to be beneficial from shortly after the birth of a baby. A bunko mother reported that she began reading aloud to her baby within six weeks of her birth. She was deeply moved when the baby responded willingly to the reading aloud after four weeks of practice. In another example, a professor of psychology observed the growth of her child, and reported that when her child was one year and eleven months old, she already had her favorite book to listen to. When she was three years and two months old, she began to read some of the Japanese letters aloud. At the age of four years and five months, she began to write these letters on her own. At the age of four years and nine months, she began to show keen interest in reading to her mother. From our observations in bunko activities, such cases are not unusual.

Many Japanese children can read Japanese books by the time they are three or four years old. This is because Japanese books for ages up to five are mostly written in letters that consist of simple, cursive lines, that are easy to identify. The letters are phonetic symbols, combining a consonant and a vowel. Learning

these letters is not difficult for any infant who has had chances to listen to their parents' reading aloud, to see the Japanese letters repeatedly, to see their parents' interest in reading, and especially to have been thoughtfully taken care of and nurtured in their interest in combining a concept, an object and the letters.

## **2.3 Indirect Ways of Sharing the Joys of Reading**

Psychologists say that: (1) children's intelligence can be developed by their own motivation to learn, (2) their learning can be promoted by their own curiosity, and (3) their active learning can be developed as far as their willingness to learn. In order to develop children's interests in reading, therefore, adult bunko members try to encourage children's motivation to learn, to awaken their curiosity, and to make the bunko a pleasant place to come to. Indirect ways of sharing the joys of reading are planned to achieve these goals. They include: storyboard theater, origami, the traditional Japanese art of folding paper, top making, etc., puppet shows, and such outdoor activities as hiking, field trips, camping, observing stars, cooking out, etc.

## **2.4 Various Activities Supporting a Bunko**

The most fundamental support activity of the bunko is the adult members' study meeting. Among the various topics, book selection is the most important. The group also studies techniques of reading aloud, book talks, and storytelling. In addition, they discuss the local library policies, comparing them with those of other localities. Through these activities, the adults learn a lot about the community and think about their roles as citizens.

Editing and publishing newsletters, proceedings, collections of essays and book reports are done in many bunko, and have worked effectively to exchange and disseminate information among the bunko members in and out of the community. Forming a liaison committee from neighboring bunko, and attending national bunko meetings also give good chances to exchange experiences, study children's books, promote children's reading interests, and develop mutual understanding and cooperation among bunko members.

### **3. REWARDS, PROBLEMS, AND THE FUTURE**

#### **3.1 Rewards from Bunko Members, Community and Librarian**

Adult bunko members are volunteers, giving their own time, money and labor for the development of better environment for children. Their rewards are simple self-satisfaction. However, they are also encouraged by: (1) positive reactions from present and former child and adult members, (2) reactions of local people who acknowledge the efforts of the bunko, understanding that the bunko is a place to unite children and books, and (3) recognition of their activities and cooperation by local librarians.

#### **3.2 Problems**

Every bunko has many problems. It is not easy to find a suitable place to house many books, and to find good volunteers to carry on the work. Bunko have been troubled by the paucity of funds to buy books and to pursue various activities. Moreover, the most difficult problems in present day bunko are: (1) a decreasing number of child members, because of the declining birth rate, and the demands on children to prepare for their high school and college entrance examinations, (2) drastic changes in the children's reading tastes, because of the changing values in the society, and (3) unsympathetic attitudes of local people and authorities who feel that developing literacy is an important role best left to formal education, and that private individuals concerned about children's reading are perhaps political radicals.

#### **3.3 The Future**

Although their activities have not been easy to maintain, it is clear that bunko have offered various chances for development to their child members and have provided them a "healing place of the soul". Such benefits are hard to quantify, and so it is sometimes very difficult to get social recognition. Nevertheless, bunko will continue to influence the reading habits of not only the next generation, but succeeding ones as well, as children themselves become parents and pass on their habits and love of reading to their own children. The seeds are sown for a rich harvest to be gathered by the next and future generations.

### **Guidelines for "Sharing the Joys of Reading by Parents and Children"<sup>1</sup>**

Shogo Saitoh  
1970

1. The object is share the joys of reading, not to persuade the children to read.
2. The reading ability of children will surely be developed by these practices.
3. The children learn how deeply the parents are moved by reading.
4. Books should not be used for moralizing or lecturing.
5. Parents should not impatiently ask a child's impressions of a book.
6. In selecting books to read, attention should be paid to choosing "the right book for the right reader at the right time."
7. The father's participation is, of course, welcome.
8. Knowledge acquired from reading should be assimilated by comparisons with reality and practical situation.
9. Each family member should have personal favorite books.
10. Every home should have a family library. Supplement: Reading aloud should be done with the readers' whole heart, and without hurry.

### **Benefits of "Sharing the Joys of Reading by Parents and Children"**

Shogo Saitoh

1. It produces lively and congenial conversation between parents and children.
2. It opens windows to the minds of parents and children.
3. It helps to enhance the joys of reading.
4. It enables everyone to find personal favorite books of good quality.
5. It develops the habit of reading.
6. It develops language sensitivity.
7. It helps children to understand their parents' thinking.
8. It reveals to the parents the growing minds of the children.
9. It reveals the attractive character of the parents.
10. It helps to develop a better reading environment in the home and in the community.

## FACTS ON JAPAN, JAPANESE SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES

**Area** 377,727 Square km/145,803 Square miles  
(State of California 158,693 Square miles)

**Population** 124,093,000 in 1991 (U.S.A. 249,000,000 in 1990)

### Education<sup>2</sup>

	Schools	Students	Teachers
K	15,041	1,977,611	101,493
1-6	24,793	9,157,429	444,903
7-9	11,290	5,188,314	286,965
10-12	5,503	5,454,929	286,092

### School Libraries<sup>3</sup>

	Ratio of Establishment	Average Volumes	per student
1-6	99.7%	5,811	14.6
7-9	99.4%	6,495	12.5
10-12	99.4%	18,240	18.1

### School Library Staff<sup>4</sup>

Average No. of Teachers in Charge of School Lib.	Ratio of Staff Placement		
	Certificated Librarian	Teacher Librarian	
1-6	2	18.5%	0.3%
7-9	1.9	20.9%	0.5%
10-12	3.77	85.1%	0.7%

### Public Libraries<sup>5</sup>

Total Number	2,038 (plus 651 Bookmobiles)
Staff	
Certificated	7,323
Non-certificated	6,994
	Total
	14,317
Part-time	3,714
Volumes	185,232,000
Books Circulated	292,244,000
(Books for Children)	105,200,000

<sup>1</sup> A movement in Japan that advocates the practice of reading aloud to one another. This practice is recommended to be done regularly every day before bed time, after dinner, or at some other convenient times.

<sup>2</sup> Japan Statistical Yearbook, 1992

<sup>3</sup> School Library White Paper, 2, 1990. Japan School Library Association

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Library Yearbook, 1993. Japan Library Association



# Literacy for the School Librarian

by

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I teach courses in children's literature and young adult literature to undergraduate and graduate students in the Faculty of Education at my university, and to graduate students in the School of Library and Information Studies. Among the undergraduate education students, a large number do not see themselves as readers. They are literate in the sense that they can decode the letters and punctuation marks printed on a page and extract information from a text. But they do not read for pleasure, and they have no confidence in their ability to make aesthetic judgements about picture books, story books, or novels. Those few undergraduates and the larger number of graduate students, both in Education and the Library School, who are enthusiastic readers have seldom been asked or shown how to reflect on their own reading, how to sort out what they bring to a text from what that text asks of them.

According to Henriette Dombey, children need to learn to read for pleasure and satisfaction, with confidence. They need to be able to draw on their experience of the world and their experience with other texts, and yet still read tentatively so that they move toward the text rather than preempting it. School librarians and teachers must have these attitudes and strategies themselves, and must be conscious of how they work, if they are to help children and adolescents learn to read.

Personal enthusiasm is crucial if we are to convince children to read. We must also have the skills to analyze how a literary work functions. But an articulated understanding of the sources of our pleasure or dissatisfaction in reading a particular text is at least as important as enthusiasm or technical skills if we are to communicate either enthusiasm or skill to young readers, and if we are to help them find books that will keep them reading.

My experience in the university classroom has convinced me that librarians and teachers need to be shown that they are not simply enablers of reading or transparent conduits for books, but themselves practitioners of reading. They must in some cases first become

readers, and in all cases become conscious of their own reading practice if they are to be fully effective as partners in reading for children and young adults. This consciousness can be surprisingly difficult to achieve. This paper draws on my experiences and the experiences of my students, reported in assignments and conversation, as we work together within the broad framework of Aidan Chambers's "critical blueprint" to think, speak, and write about how we read.

Aidan Chambers introduces his critical blueprint as "a number of questions which help clarify the nature of the book and the way we should mediate it with children. These questions may be asked as we read the book, or afterwards, as we contemplate the experience" (174). The questions, as Chambers poses them in chapter XV of *Introducing Books to Children*, are:

1. *What happened to me as I read?*
2. *Which features of the book caused my responses?*
  - a. *The book-as-object*
  - b. *Responses caused by the reader's personal history*
  - c. *Response caused by the reader's history as a reader*
  - d. *Response caused by the Text alone*
3. *What does this book ask of readers if they are to enjoy what it offers and discover the Text's potentialities?*
4. *Why is this book worth my own and the children's time and attention?*
5. *Which would be the most appropriate way of introducing this book to the children I have in mind?*
6. *What do I know about the background of this book--about its author, how it came to be written, or the place where it is set, and so on--that might interest the children and stimulate their desire to read?*
7. *Are there books by the same author, or by other authors, which relate to this one and which the children have already read, or perhaps ought to read before reading this one? And are there books which follow on naturally from this one?*

When I give the critical blueprint to my students as the framework for our class discussions and for a written assignment, I present a slightly altered version, because my objective is to clarify the nature of the reading as much as it is to clarify the nature of the book. The two processes are, of course, inseparable, but I focus on clarifying the nature of the particular readings not only as a means to understanding the nature of the text, but as a pedagogical end in itself.

Questions 5 and 7 are omitted because I want to dislodge my students from their mental position as mediator in the library or classroom and get them to think about their own reading. Question 6 should, perhaps, vanish for the same reason. But gossip about a book or its author is such a delightful, and inevitable, part of any book discussion, that it seems counter-productive to leave it out. Question 2 is simply reworded to achieve a parallel structure and clarify the logic.

Depending on the level of the course, we discuss somewhere between eleven and eighteen books together during the semester. In the undergraduate course I also ask the students to choose one of two titles and work through the first two questions of the critical blueprint on their own. The results are handed in as a written paper before those books are discussed in class. After the class discussion, the students write their responses to the remaining questions, and reflect on their responses to the first two questions in the light of the general discussion. My instructions for the written assignment read, in part:

In this paper I am looking for evidence of thought and engagement with the text: you do not have to like the book. You must demonstrate that you are conscious of your responses to the book and of their sources, and that you have an understanding of how the book works.

In what follows I will go through questions 1 and 2, the response questions, of the critical blueprint as I use it with my classes, drawing on my own experiences and those of my students to illustrate each one. I hope that anyone who already knows the Chambers version will find this interesting as further evidence of how well these questions work for framing a discussion of a text. For those who don't know the Chambers version, it may serve as an introduction to a very useful way of thinking about books and reading.

### **1. What happened to me as I read?**

To answer this question, we "tell the story of our reading" (Chambers 174). The unpracticed response is usually one short comment, often focussed on the book rather than on the reader: it was boring; I thought it was dumb; I loved it; it was funny; it was too scary; or (most discouragingly), it was o.k., I guess. Any of these one-liners can be unpacked at least a little, and some of them a great deal more than that.

"It was boring" could mean that the reader started the book with a complete lack of enthusiasm and only because it was going to be discussed in class the next week. She tried conscientiously to pay attention throughout the first chapter, hoping to get interested, but the book failed to catch her fancy, and she skimmed through the rest of it just to get some idea of the events and characters. Or it could mean "I got confused with all that stuff about the diary in chapter one, and so the whole thing didn't really make much sense to me."

"It was o.k., I guess" could introduce a variety of reading stories. The reader may have quite enjoyed the book except for the ending, which was a disappointment. Or he liked all the details about running an antique shop, but found the main plot line too predictable. Or she liked the exciting action when it finally did happen, but there were too many slow parts. Or he found the book completely boring, and didn't actually finish it, but knows the person he's talking with thinks it's a marvelous book.

The longer version of "I loved it!" turned out, in one case, to be "I decided to read the first chapter while I was warming up the van, and the next thing I knew I had finished the book and the van was REALLY warm, and I thought, Oh no, I was supposed to be thinking about the book as I was reading!"

The "Oh no" serves as a reminder that watching oneself read with pleasure is an acquired skill. It demands entering into a state of mild schizophrenia. Naive readers will have to reconstruct the story of their readings after the fact, if they become absorbed in their book. And the sophisticated reader may choose sometimes to lose herself completely in a story.

In a natural, unstructured discussion, the initial descriptions of responses to a text would have causes attached to them: "I loved it because I'm a fantasy reader, and this book reminded me of my favorite McKillip novel." "I hated it because I knew right from the beginning that the dog would die at the end, and my dog got run over last summer and I didn't want

to go through that again." "I thought it was dumb because X had too much to bear, life was too hard for her, I didn't think that was fair." But part of the point of following the critical blueprint is to learn to separate out the different sources of our response to a text. And so, admittedly artificially, the "because" is left out of our answers to the first question in class discussions, saved up until we get to the four parts of the second question.

## 2. What caused my responses?

In answering question 2, the challenge is to figure out which of the four sources suggested by Chambers gave rise to the reader's responses.

### a. The book-as-object.

Chambers reminds us that books have shape, weight, texture, smell, mobility, and visual appeal (174). Publishers ask us to judge a book by its cover, and we cannot help doing so. I bought the Tor paperback of Jane Yolen's *Sister Light, Sister Dark* with great anticipation because I like her books very much, but the dreadful cover illustration has forever shadowed my response to this particular story of hers. I only realized it when I tried to explain my dissatisfaction with the novel to someone who knows and loves the book, and who countered all my criticisms about the text successfully until at last I realized that it was a part of the paratext, the picture on the cover, that was the source of an initial dislike that has never been completely dispelled by the story between the covers.

One of the clearest examples of the power of the book-as-object to influence a reading came to me a month ago, in a group discussing Annie Dalton's young adult fantasy novel, *Out of the Ordinary*. Two members of the discussion group didn't like the book, and three, including me, did. The two who didn't like it had read the American edition, the other three the British edition.

The American HarperKeypoint paperback has a realistic, cheerful illustration on the cover. The only hint of fantasy is the pink castle rising out of fantasyland clouds in the background. The print is very large, large enough to seem intended for young children, and there is almost no right margin at all, so that the pages look unbalanced and uncontained. Because of the large print, the book is 273 pages long, 100 pages longer than the British edition. The page numbers are emphasized by being centered at the bottom of each page.

The British Teens-Mandarin paperback has a darker, more powerful cover that clearly signals fantasy. It reminded some of the readers in the discussion group of Alan Garner's *The Owl Service*. The print is small, standard paperback size. While the margins are not generous, they seem adequate because of the small print. The titles are enclosed in an intricate ornament and on the table of contents and the first page of each chapter are set in a broad left margin. In short, the book looks more attractive, more interesting, and more grownup.

There are other differences in the paratext, as well. The page preceding the title page in the American edition carries an excerpt from the text. The same page in the British edition has a similar passage as well, somewhat shorter, but it is followed by three laudatory quotations from reviews of the book. Certainly the one from *Books for Keeps* and the one by Jan Mark in *TES* would be likely to predispose an adult reader familiar with the world of children's literature to like the book. Finally, the publisher's description on the back of the American edition gives away more of the plot than the British one does.

It would be foolish to claim that the book-as-object was the only trigger for the two different sets of responses to this novel. But I could feel my liking for the book fade a little as I looked at the American edition for the first time during the discussion, and one of the members of the group, an enthusiastic fantasy reader, wondered aloud as she looked at the British edition whether her tepid response would not have been warmer if she had read that version. We all agreed that the British edition was a good deal more attractive.

### b. The reader's personal history.

Chambers writes that "With children, the teacher's job is to help clarify the difference between the experience offered by the book and the same experience known to the reader personally" (177). I've learned that this is also the teacher's job with university students.

Helen Fogwell Porter's *january, february, june or july* is one of the novels on the reading list of my young adult materials course. It is a Canadian book, set in St. John's, Newfoundland. The protagonist is a fifteen-year-old girl from a poor working class family who becomes pregnant and has an abortion. One of my students, Diane, objected strenuously to the book, not because of the subject matter, but because, she said, it wasn't realistic: it wouldn't have been so simple to get an abortion in St.



John's, and the girl would have been far more disturbed by the experience than Diane thought the novel showed her to be.

Diane grew up a Catholic in the Maritimes, and had worked as a teacher in Newfoundland. She certainly realized that she was measuring the book against her personal experience, but she had no real understanding of how her own history was coloring her reading. The rest of the class argued vigorously that within the world of the story as it was crafted by the author, the abortion and its effect on the girl were entirely convincing, and not as straightforward as Diane thought they were. Diane was not persuaded by the class discussion. Because this matter touched her so nearly, she was unable to make the distinction between her world and the world of the book. But the other participants had an effective lesson in the importance of recognizing personal history as a source of response to certain features of a book.

A reader's personal history can also be a gate into the world of the book, instead of a barrier to what Chambers calls "the text-intention" (177). Another student in the same class had grown up in St. John's. She could hear every Newfoundland cadence and intonation in the dialogue, and knew every building and street corner mentioned in the story. She felt completely at home in the world created by the author, and was happy to be there. As a sophisticated reader, she was aware that part of her admiration for the novel came from her delight in its accurate representation of a place she knew well.

### **c. The reader's history as a reader.**

It is easy to agree with Chambers that "In one sense, all books are made out of other books and all our reading is dependent on all we have read before" (177). Parodies are, perhaps, the most obvious example of this dependency. Readers of Robert Munsch's *The Paper Bag Princess* are expected to know that in fairy tales princes usually rescue princesses, and that the author has done it the other way around in his story on purpose. A reader who is unacquainted with the form of parody and the content of our best known fairy tales will read the story very differently from one who is equipped to get the joke.

All stories work according to conventions the reader has to know or be able to figure out, and agree to abide by for the duration of the story. Stories can also call up other fictional worlds, sometimes by explicit reference to a specific title or character, as *Little Women* does

with *Pilgrim's Progress*, and sometimes through similarity, a kind of relatedness, Chambers's "family tree". Intertextuality need not be deliberately created on the author's part. The links can be even be made backward, from a book that is older in my reading history but written after the book that reminds me of it. Someone who has read widely will have a large literary repertoire to draw on, and a good chance of having the requisite background knowledge and understanding a particular book demands. But "history as a reader" must not be defined by books alone. Television programs, movies, stories told by our parents or grandparents, music videos are all narratives that readers bring to enrich or confuse their readings of a particular text.

When I first read Susan Cooper's *The Dark Is Rising*, I found myself bringing memories of Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill*, with its spell of "oak, ash and thorn" to the story, and felt myself to be in a pleasantly familiar place. The character of the Walker was made more potent by the dimly remembered figures of the Wandering Jew and the Flying Dutchman. A jumbled composite of all the Arthurian stories I ever read formed a misty backdrop for the whole thing, and from at least a dozen other texts I knew about the sun sign and the Celtic cross, the power of iron and running water to ward against magic. Although I can see the flaws in the novel, I reread it with pleasure, largely, I think, because of these echoes it sets ringing in my head.

Many of my students love the book, too, and few of them bring the old fashioned reading history to it that I do. John read a great deal of popular fantasy, especially that drawing on Celtic myths. He felt himself to be an expert in the genre and read Cooper with the confidence of someone prepared to judge. Tolkien readers in the class usually love the novel, and aren't surprised to hear that Cooper had been a student of Tolkien's. Bob said he liked the book so much because he was a *Star Trek* fan, and the book had a lot in common with that television series. Bob was delighted by his own enthusiasm for a complex book because he was not, by his own admission, a reader, and lacked confidence in his ability to enjoy a novel. I watch *Star Trek* myself, but I had never thought of it in connection with Cooper's novel, and I still don't. But I can see how Bob links the two. Kathy, also a *Star Trek* watcher, couldn't see the connection. She didn't like the Cooper book because it brought fantasy into the everyday

world, while *Star Trek* is safely set in the future. She could understand the purpose of the characters in *Star Trek* because their aim is constant and explicit, but she could never figure out what the forces of the Light in *The Dark Is Rising* really hoped to achieve. (Nor can I, for that matter.)

There are always students who don't like the book. Some simply dislike the heroics of epic fantasy. Others, who are unfamiliar with fantasy or don't read it by choice, are confused by the time slips and either lose confidence in themselves or become irritated when they try to figure out the mechanism, but can't do so because the author doesn't tell them enough. In both cases, the readers are bumped out of the world of the story by their response. Some dislike the book because all the symbolism makes them uneasy. They see it, but they don't understand what it means and can't tolerate the uncertainty of not knowing. On the other hand, there are readers who know they are missing something but read right past the gaps, become absorbed in the story in spite of them. They sense rather than understand the power of seventh sons, of wood and iron, and fire and water, and will have a richer context for these symbols at the next encounter. And this is a very good thing. If we responded favorably only to the familiar, we would stand still. As my friend Margaret Mackey puts it, we become readers one book at a time.

#### **d. The text alone.**

If we have identified the layers of responses that are provoked by the text but come from outside it, and if we can put them aside, which isn't always possible, then we can come to responses caused by the text alone. At this level we can see what Chambers calls "the author's storytelling tactics" (181). My colleague Jon Stott uses an analogy to the "instant replay" of sports broadcasts on television. Lemieux has a breakaway and seems about to score, but the goalie makes an unbelievable save. How did he do that? If we're watching on television instead of at the rink, we can see that play again, from different camera angles, in slow motion, with commentary from the announcers, and appreciate exactly what happened.

As a reader I am the camera, the director, and the announcer all in one. I can stop the action, while the crowd is cheering and the players circle around the rink exchanging congratulatory thumps, and take another look. How does Cooper keep up the feeling of sus-

pense, even though she has told me at the beginning that nothing really bad can happen to Will, and even though I've read the book four times? Why, on the fifth reading, am I still turning the pages as quickly as I can, racing through the story to see what happens?

Discussing responses caused by the text alone usually requires a closer look at the text. Lisa, who found Philippa Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden* confusing on first reading, liked the story a great deal better when she reread it to answer this question. Because she was paying close attention to the text, she allowed herself to be guided by the author in a way that she hadn't the first time through. She listened to what Pearce had to say, and realized that the clock striking thirteen always marked the transition to the fantasy world of the garden, and that the furnishings of the hall changed with the shift from real time to fantasy time. She also noticed that some words were printed in italics, and that they gave her clues that helped her sort things out. She hadn't found Tom's growing belief that the garden was real convincing, but this time she registered his brother Peter's belief, and eventually it persuaded her that the garden did exist.

Susan wrote the following in her introduction to her paper on *Tom's Midnight Garden*: This is the second draft of this paper. I hated *Tom's Midnight Garden*. However, by the time I completed the questions and [the section on] the responses caused by the text, I changed my mind. I once again took the book, curled up on my bed and reread it. I allowed myself to just listen to the story and forget all the assumptions I had made regarding the story. I ignored the fact that *Tom's Midnight Garden* was a fantasy--a genre I hate!! I now see the story differently. Although I can't say I love this book, I did enjoy it and would certainly recommend it. The next time someone recommends a fantasy book to me, I will be far more open minded about reading it.

As this excerpt suggests, the process of answering the question about responses caused by the text alone can be a very revealing one. It is also the most difficult of the questions to answer, for two reasons. First, it demands an effortful reading, one that listens to what the writer has to say, rather than asserting what she ought to have said (Fisher 129). Second, the students frequently fall into what I call the literary elements trap. Because they have little confidence in their ability to think critically about a text, and because they have been con-

ditioned to look for the one right answer, they fall back on describing plot, characterization, theme, mode, style, setting, and point of view from an objective distance, in a way that has nothing to do with their responses to these elements. As a result, the answer to question 2 has no relation whatsoever to the answer to question 1, "What happened to me as I read?"

One student, Heather, was an extreme example of this reluctance to engage the text. She said trying to find the sources of her response in the text made her feel as though she were floating on a feather on the Saskatchewan River and couldn't swim. She was happy to talk about her reading history and personal history, but she simply could not overcome her uneasiness about looking at the text as a source of *her* responses.

Aside from the engagement with the text and the focus on one's own reading demanded by question 2nd, the greatest challenge the critical blueprint poses is that of separating and sorting out the different sources of the reader's responses. This is, of course, an artificial situation, part of an exercise. An informal discussion is not structured in this way; no one interrupts in midsentence to say "Wait, that belongs in question 2c, history as a reader." Nor do the sources operate discretely: for the reader who is deeply attached to her pets and won't read animal stories because the dog always dies, personal history and history as a reader come together in her reluctance to read *Shiloh*. For me, looking at the cover of *Out of the Ordinary* and thinking of *The Owl Service*, my history as a reader and the book-as-object operate together as sources of a response. But it is important to practice the separation because it is the best way to discover that there are different sources, to learn a part of how complex the process of reading is.

My students learn to use the critical blueprint in class discussion. At first they are hesitant, afraid of giving a wrong or stupid answer. Gradually they come to trust the process and realize that even a mistake, either in following the blueprint or in following the author's codes, is instructive once it is identified, and therefore a contribution to the discussion. The diversity of responses to a given title becomes something we all look forward to, and a minority opinion ("I guess I'm the only one who didn't think this book was wonderful") is welcomed for the insights it will bring. The students often persuade their roommates, parents, spouses, children, nephews and nieces to

read the books on the reading list and carry on the book talk at home. They bring interesting excerpts from these conversations to class, contributing these new readings and responses as data for our exploration.

Often, their own readings of a text are enriched by what other readers made of it. Mine always are. Sometimes their readings are radically changed by the comments of other readers, and they are opened to something new. One student reported the following about the class discussion of *Tom's Midnight Garden*.

My initial interpretation of the book was extremely negative which stemmed from my lack of interest and familiarity with this particular genre. . . . A discussion of the book is what turned it around for me. My peers had not experienced the same frustrations and negative reactions as I had. Instead, they had enjoyed it. Their comments suggested that this book was worthwhile reading. This new insight aroused my interest and curiosity. Not being able to share in their enthusiasm made me feel left out. I wanted to experience the book as they had. With this motivation, I returned to the book a second time to see what I had missed.

Those who have read little in the past benefit from the larger repertoires of the experienced readers, and see demonstrated how reading builds on reading. The enthusiasm of those who love to read is persuasive, too.

This is important, because so many of my students, especially the Education undergraduates, are self-confessed nonreaders. It is to their credit that they take the children's literature course to try to compensate for that: they are trying to make up for what they know will be a lack in their work with children. A number of students tell me at the end of the course that they have learned to read for pleasure again, or for the first time. The value given to their own responses, the creativity of the discussions with a community of readers, the thinking they have to do, give them confidence as readers.

Perhaps I am beginning to sound like a snake oil saleswoman here. I do admit my missionary fervor. But I don't mean to suggest that the process is completely successful. One student, Adam, was an inexperienced reader who found it impossible work within the frame of the critical blueprint. He told me that

thinking or writing about himself made him very uncomfortable. He never overcame his reluctance, and became the only student ever to fail the written assignment on the critical blueprint. Another student, an experienced reader with a history of academic success, could not accept the notion that more than one interpretation of a text was possible. She continued to argue for a correct answer, which she assumed would be hers, and I was never able to diffuse her frustration with the discussions. But over the six years that I have taught children's literature and young adult literature courses, I have become increasingly persuaded that the most useful thing to make happen in the classroom is to show readers in action.

Even if the critical blueprint doesn't turn students into enthusiastic readers, it gives them the opportunity to become conscious readers. It also shows them how diverse individual responses to a text can be, and what the sources of that diversity are. This is, I think, of enormous significance for teachers and librarians. Most of the students I meet still have the notion that there is a correct reading, a right answer. I am not arguing for a laissez-faire approach that gives free reign to subjectivity. I agree with Margery Fisher: "The book comes first. Children must learn to come toward the book, not the other way around" (129). The point of the critical blueprint is precisely to encourage that.

Reading to find out how the story works is quite a different thing from reading to pass a test. Student study guides in novel units still ask questions like "What does Scout find in the tree in Radley's front yard?" "What age are the children now?" "Does Scout want to be a lady?"<sup>1</sup> The answers to questions like these won't give the reader anything but a grade. Worse, for uncertain readers they get in the way of reading. At the very least they insist on an efferent rather than an aesthetic reading, and are guaranteed to make reading a chore rather than a pleasure.

Something like the critical blueprint shows teachers and librarians an alternative to twenty years of novel units on *To Kill a Mockingbird*. If they have worked with the critical blueprint as students themselves, they have learned a model for teaching literature that does not depend for its authority on the answers in the Teacher's Study Guide or in their notes from university literature courses. They have also learned from their own experience, or from seeing it in others, that the young

readers they are guiding can move beyond the familiar, learn to like something new; that they can read a little beyond themselves, be confused and still be absorbed in the story. They have seen that matching a book with a reader must take into account a great many variables.

This approach to the teaching and study of literature is certainly not new. Louise Rosenblatt's *Literature as Exploration* was first published in 1938. The scholarly conversations about it have continued all through the succeeding 55 years, and Farrell and Squire's *Transactions with Literature: A Fifty-Year Perspective* is a useful collection of articles with "a point of view that embraces both the reader and the literary work while focusing on the transaction between the two" (vii). David Buckingham in his introduction to *Reading Audiences: Young People and the Media* expands the discussion to forms of narrative other than the printed novel. Deanne Bogdan considers the implications for the justification and censorship of literature texts. These are a very few of the writers who have illuminated this approach and reinforced my sense of its usefulness. But year after year my students have demonstrated to me that practice still lags behind theory, and so I have offered my experience as a part of the conversation.

## Endnotes

1. These questions are taken from a teaching kit on *To Kill A Mockingbird*, put out by The Perfection Form Company in 1960, which I found in the Education Library at my university. To judge by the stamps on the due date slips, this kit is still very much in use.

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# The State of the World's School Libraries

by

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## Introduction

The last two and half decades have seen many changes in the world's social structure. Nations that were once economic powers have had their dominance reduced, large republics have broken up into smaller nations, numerically small religious and cultural groups have become more significant, the green revolution has spread rapidly, and technology, in particular the computer, is playing a major role in every walk of life. In addition, information is becoming a crucial factor in the economic, political, cultural, ecological and technical arenas.

In short, the world is changing. It is the responsibility of the schools of today to produce citizens of tomorrow who can survive in this new world order. A citizen of tomorrow needs a higher quality of education, which includes not only the basic 3 Rs, but also knowledge, attitudes and skills that address the changes the world is witnessing. Yet the education systems in most countries are still based on the agricultural economies of the past. In many developing and less developed countries, the rate of economic development has outpaced the changes in education. Changes, if any, have basically consisted of administrative restructuring, introduction of new subjects, curriculum revisions, revised testing procedures and other isolated changes. Areas which cut across the curriculum or the whole education system have generally been neglected. Few countries have considered, much less implemented, complete overhauls in their systems of education.

The school library is one across-the-system element that has been linked to increasing the quality of education. Many reviews of research studies on school libraries conclude that the presence and active use of a school library can significantly influence student achievement (Mahar 1983, Didier 1985, Haycock 1987, Woolls 1990, Haycock 1992). Irrespective of whether the role of the library is to encourage students to read widely in their spare time or to ensure that students are effective users of

information, the school library has an important role to play in education and in national development. Unlike the isolated changes that have been introduced, the school library is not a new subject to be introduced into the curriculum. The domain of the school library cuts across the curriculum. The school library today is no longer a luxury in education; it is a necessity.

Yet the state of world's school libraries is generally unsatisfactory. This is the view based on an international survey of school libraries carried out in 1993. This paper highlights the results of the relevant portions of the study. [The full study is not reported here, and the interested reader is referred to (Singh, 1993)]. This paper goes on to suggest means for the greater development, as seen from a developing country perspective. It is hoped that the results of this study and the recommendations in this paper can be used as a starting point in the efforts to improve the school libraries and, in turn, the quality of education worldwide.

## The Study

An international survey of school libraries was carried out in 1993 as part of a Ph.D. dissertation requirement. The main aim of the study was to examine school library systems across nations. In order to do so, a series of indicators and variables for the comparison of school libraries was first established by surveying thirty leaders in the field of school librarianship from twenty-nine countries. The indicators and variables were then used as a basis to survey the current state of school libraries internationally.

The full study basically involved the following steps, some of which were carried out concurrently with others:

1. Selected library and education literature from the past twelve years was first analyzed to obtain an overview of the existing state of knowledge on school libraries internationally.
2. A survey of the literature was also carried

out to establish a preliminary list of indicators and variables for the comparison of school libraries internationally.

3. This preliminary list of indicators and variables was presented, in the form of a questionnaire, to an international panel of experts on school librarianship to obtain a professional judgement on a valid set of indicators for international comparisons.
4. An authoritative source of information on school libraries was identified in each of the approximately 190 countries of the world with the assistance of the country's embassy in the United States or the country's representative to the United Nations.
5. The indicators and variables derived in step 3 above were used to formulate questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to the official sources identified in step 4, for them to describe the current status of school libraries in their respective countries.
6. In the meantime, information on the demographic, economic and social conditions of the countries was compiled from authoritative published sources.
7. The information obtained in step 5 above was correlated with selected demographic, economic and social indicators obtained in step 6 for the countries, to determine if any relationships existed.

8. The information obtained in steps 1 and 5 was verified, where possible, through analysis of documents supplied by the respondents.
9. The information obtained in step 5 was corroborated, where possible, with information obtained from interviews with international participants at the 21st International Association of School Librarianship conference in Belfast.
10. All available relevant information was then synthesized to answer the research questions of the study.

### **The Findings**

Of the 185 questionnaires sent out in January 1993, 64 countries replied by the end of April, giving a return rate of 34.8% (see Appendix A for list of responding countries). Based on the analysis of responses from these sixty-four countries, the findings can be summarized in the tables that follow. The tables show the percentage of countries which gave the corresponding responses; more detailed information can be found in the original study report of Singh, 1993.

**Table 1**  
**Library Facilities in Schools**

Extent of Libraries within the Schools	Primary	Secondary
<b>All</b> schools have centralized libraries	12.5 %	28.1 %
At least <b>half</b> of schools have centralized libraries	45 %	70 %
<b>None</b> of the schools have centralized libraries	16 %	1.6 %

Access to Any Library (Inside or Outside the Schools)	Primary	Secondary
<b>All</b> primary schools have access to some form of library	52.8 %	67.3 %
At least <b>half</b> of schools have access to some form of library	73.6 %	80 %
<b>None</b> of the schools have access to some form of library	3.8 %	0 %

**Table 2**  
**Philosophy of School Library**

Country's Philosophy on School Library	Percentage
The school library has a central role in education	21.8 %
The school library has a supplementary role in education	43.6 %
The school library is a good thing to have when resources allow for it	32.7 %



**Table 3**  
**Ranking of Library among School Services**

Service	Rank
Textbooks	1
Science Laboratories and Equipment	2
Guidance and Counselling	3
Sports and Athletics	4
Vocational/Technical Education	5
Health Services	6
School Library	7
Special Education	8

Countries which Ranked School Library as	Percentage
Highest	1.8%
Lowest	9.1%

**Table 4**  
**Role of School Library**

Role	Percentage
No defined role	16.7 %
As a place for pupils to study when they are free	3.7 %
For recreational reading, viewing and/or listening	11.1 %
For enrichment of the learning process	59.3 %
For instruction requiring library materials and/or services	3.7 %
For finding specific information and ideas	3.7 %

**Table 5**  
**Inclusion of School Libraries in Educational Development Plans**

Inclusion in Educational Development Plans	Percentage
School libraries <b>INCLUDED</b> in development plans	89.1 %
School libraries <b>NOT</b> included in development plans	10.9 %

**Table 6**  
**Schools with Teacher-Librarians**

Presence of Teacher-Librarians	Primary	Secondary
With teacher-librarian in <b>ALL</b> schools	13.5 %	21 %
With teacher-librarian in <b>SOME</b> schools	67 %	75 %
<b>WITHOUT</b> any teacher-librarians at all	19.5 %	4 %

**Table 7**  
**Schools with Full-Time Teacher-Librarians**

Full-Time Teacher-Librarians	Primary	Secondary
<b>WITH</b> full-time teacher-librarians	1.5 %	10 %
<b>WITHOUT</b> full-time teacher-librarians	98.5 %	90 %

**Table 8**  
**Role of Teacher-Librarians**

Role	Percentage
No defined role	31.5%
As a librarian, making resources available to teachers and students	27.8%
As a specialist teacher, instructing teachers and students on how to use the library	29.6%
As an instructional partner, jointly planning and implementing the with teachers	5.6%

**Table 9**  
**Education of Teacher-Librarians**

Level of Education/Training in Librarianship	Percentage
No special training	21.8 %
In-service training only	27.3 %
Certificate or equivalent level	14.5 %
Diploma or associate degree level	12.7 %
Bachelor's or Master's degree or higher	1.8 %

**Table 10**  
**Collections of School Libraries**

Type of Material	Primary	Secondary
Print Materials	100%	100%
Audio materials and associated equipment	42.9%	50.0%
Visual materials and associated equipment	37.6%	40.7%
Electronic Materials and associated equipment	14.3%	25.9%
Communication equipment	6.1%	13.0%

**Table 11**  
**Existence of Standards and/or Guidelines**

Existence of Mandatory Standards for School Libraries	Percentage
Yes	36.4 %
No	63.6 %

Existence of Guidelines for School Libraries	Percentage
Yes	70.9 %
No	29.1 %

**Table 12**  
**Existence of Professional Associations**

Existence of Professional Associations for School Libraries	Percentage
Yes	45.5 %
No	54.5 %

**Table 13**  
**Access to School Library**

Days on which School Library is Open	Primary	Secondary
During certain school days only	23.6 %	14.8 %
Every school day	72.3 %	77.8 %
Every school day and during holidays	2.1 %	5.6 %

**Table 14**  
**Central Organization for School Libraries**

Central Organization for Advising, Administering or Coordinating School Libraries	Percentage
With central organization	75 %
No central organization	25 %

**Table 15**  
**Evaluation of School Libraries**

Existence of formal means of evaluation	Percentage
Means of evaluation exists	47 %
No means of evaluation	53 %

**Table 16**  
**Overall Status of School Libraries - Policymakers**

Level of Satisfaction	Percentage
Very satisfied	0 %
Generally satisfied	43 %
Minimally satisfied	30 %
Not at all satisfied	27 %

**Table 17**  
**Overall Status of School Libraries - Users**

Level of Satisfaction	Percentage
Very satisfied	0 %
Generally satisfied	37 %
Minimally satisfied	43%
Not at all satisfied	20 %

**Table 18**  
**High Positive Correlations with Socio-Economic Factors**

Library Variable	Socio-Economic Factor	Correlation Coefficient
Percentage of primary schools with no libraries	Percentage of population under age of 15	+ 0.78
Percentage of secondary schools with no libraries	Student:Teacher ratio at primary level	+ 0.771
Percentage of primary schools with no libraries	Student:Teacher ratio at primary level	+ 0.69
Presence of communication equipment in secondary school libraries	Number of telephones per 100 inhabitants in country	+ 0.68
Presence of electronic materials and equipment in secondary school libraries	Number of telephones per 100 inhabitants in country	+ 0.67
Presence of electronic materials and equipment in secondary school libraries	Gross national product (GNP) per capita of country	+ 0.63
Presence of visual materials and projection equipment in primary school libraries	Percentage of GNP spent on education in country	+ 0.63
Presence of electronic materials and equipment in primary school libraries	Energy consumption per capita in country	+ 0.62
Percentage of secondary schools with no libraries	Percentage of population under age of 15	+ 0.60

**Table 19**  
**High Negative Correlations with Socio-Economic Factors**

Library Variable	Socio-Economic Factor	Correlation Coefficient
Percentage of primary schools with no libraries	Gross national product (GNP) per capita of country	- 0.80
Provision of services by school library to groups of different cultures and backgrounds	Number of telephones per 100 inhabitants in country	- 0.65
Percentage of primary schools with no libraries	Number of telephones per 100 inhabitants in country	- 0.62
Presence of audio materials in secondary school libraries	Student:Teacher ratio at primary level	- 0.61
Presence of visual materials in secondary school libraries	Student:Teacher ratio at primary level	- 0.60
Percentage of secondary schools with no libraries	Gross national product (GNP) per capita of country	- 0.58

**Table 20**  
**Factors Encouraging the Development of School Libraries**

Factor	Rank
Finance	1
Role of a central organization	2
Education/Training of Teacher-Librarians	3
Personal interest and efforts of individuals	4
Changes in the educational environment	5

**Table 21**  
**Factors Hindering the Development of School Libraries**

Factor	Rank
Lack of finances	1
Lack of trained personnel	2
Lack of physical facilities	3
Inadequate collections and materials	4
Administrative and organizational problems	5
Lack of commitment among the authorities	5

### **Recommendations**

The above findings suggest that the state of the world's school libraries is far from satisfactory. While the achievements of international organizations and associations, such as the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL), in the development of school libraries are to be commended, there is still much that needs to be done. The international organizations and associations need to play an even greater role if school libraries are to contribute significantly in preparing the citizens of tomorrow.

International organizations cannot continue to do what has always been done in the past, perhaps a little more or a little better, and expect it to produce wonderful results. The efforts of the past have produced commendable results, but the world is changing and we need to change our approaches accordingly.

International organizations need to set bold but yet realistic targets for school libraries worldwide. A few recommendations and suggestions are put forward below, based on a developing country perspective. These recommendations and suggestions are primarily directed towards the members of IASL but are equally applicable to UNESCO, the World Bank, IFLA, and all other international agencies and organizations.

### **Analyzing the Current Picture**

We need first to analyze the current research, and what it tells us about the current state of school libraries internationally. We may need to verify some of the existing information, carry out further studies and

even change our knowledge base, if necessary. Armed with this knowledge, we need to intensify our efforts to improve the state of the world school libraries. We must be brave in setting bold targets. For example, we should aim for the globalization of school libraries so that by the year 2005, every school shall have a school library.

### **Convincing policy makers**

The key policy makers in each country can foster or hinder the development of school libraries. We need to identify these key officials, and convince them of the role and importance of school libraries. The study described earlier indicated that the personal interests of individuals can be a major factor in the development of school libraries. The study also indicated that the lack of commitment among the authorities is a barrier to development. Officials in the Education Departments, National Libraries, and Library Associations, as well as other interested leaders must be coaxed and influenced by all possible means until they are committed to the development of school libraries. A central organization within the Ministry or Department of Education or the National Library in each country must be staffed by committed people who are responsible for the development of school libraries. We also need to develop a core group of volunteer change agents in every country. IASL should set itself a target of 10,000 members, with every country of the world represented in its membership, by the year 2000. These members must be linked into a network, whether electronic or print, so that their efforts can be synergized to



achieve the goals.

### **Widespread Dissemination of Information**

Information is a key factor in the development of school libraries. It is ironic that while the developed nations are suffering from an information explosion and key officials are literally drowning in information, the developing countries are starved for information. While we celebrate the end of political apartheid, we must ensure that an information apartheid never materializes. IASL must be committed towards ensuring the free and widespread dissemination of information about school libraries. The recommendations of the 1993 IFLA pre-conference on school libraries need to be disseminated as widely as possible. New publications as well as old but relevant materials must be made available to the less developed nations. Old copies of journals can be donated to less developed countries. Old but useful books can be reprinted for worldwide dissemination. Summaries of research findings should be widely disseminated. Research should be encouraged at all levels and in all countries with simple how-to-do guides. Locals in developing countries should be taught and encouraged to do simple research and exchange their findings with colleagues in developed countries.

### **Nurturing the development of school libraries in all countries**

We need to play a more proactive role to ensure the development of school libraries. We should not expect interested parties to approach us, rather we should "sell" our message to anyone who is willing to listen to us. The focus of our attention must change from a few selected countries who are interested in what we do, to all the 200+ nations of the world. There are many countries who do not have even the basic library facilities, and who may not even be aware of the many potentialities of libraries. A strategic action plan for the advancement of school libraries in all nations needs to be urgently developed as a priority. This plan must encompass all areas that need attention, including official policies, funding, physical facilities, personnel, education, collections, etc. Other development agencies must at the same time be encouraged to include the development of school libraries as part of their development efforts.

It is hoped that the findings and the recommendations in this paper can be used as a starting point in the efforts to improve the school libraries internationally and, in turn, the quality of education worldwide.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Countries which Responded to the Survey**

- |             |                 |
|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. Austria  | 33. Malaysia    |
| 2. Bahrain  | 34. Malta       |
| 3. Barbados | 35. Monaco      |
| 4. Belarus  | 36. Namibia     |
| 5. Belgium  | 37. Netherlands |
| 6. Belize   | 38. New Zealand |
| 7. Botswana | 39. Nicaragua   |
| 8. Bulgaria | 40. Niger       |

- |                        |                              |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 9. Burundi             | 41. Norway                   |
| 10. Chile              | 42. Pakistan                 |
| 11. Croatia            | 43. Panama                   |
| 12. Czech Republic     | 44. Papua New Guinea         |
| 13. Denmark            | 45. Philippines              |
| 14. Dominica           | 46. Poland                   |
| 15. Dominican Republic | 47. Qatar                    |
| 16. El Salvador        | 48. St. Lucia                |
| 17. Estonia            | 49. St. Vincent & Grenadines |
| 18. Ethiopia           | 50. Senegal                  |
| 19. Fiji               | 51. Sierra Leone             |
| 20. Finland            | 52. Singapore                |
| 21. France             | 53. Slovakia                 |
| 22. Germany            | 54. South Korea              |
| 23. Grenada            | 55. Sri Lanka                |
| 24. Italy              | 56. Swaziland                |
| 25. Jamaica            | 57. Sweden                   |
| 26. Jordan             | 58. Thailand                 |
| 27. Latvia             | 59. Tonga                    |
| 28. Lesotho            | 60. Trinidad & Tobago        |
| 29. Liechtenstein      | 61. Uganda                   |
| 30. Lithuania          | 62. United Arab Emirates     |
| 31. Luxembourg         | 63. United Kingdom           |
| 32. Malawi             | 64. Zambia                   |

## Young Adult Reading Habits in Ukraine

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When the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, life in each of the former constituent republics proceeded on its own course. Although intellectual life in each one of them was marked deeply by the imprints of the common Soviet experience, their own particular characteristics are the determinants of present and future developments. Some of the steps taken in the de-Sovietization process are firmly rooted, some are experimental. New orientations and polarizations have become visible. The ecological and economic problems seem insurmountable. These are difficult but interesting times and the events of the last decade were perhaps without historic precedent. Literacy was and is a vital, perhaps deciding factor in these developments. Gorbachev's policy of glasnost which began the process was, first and foremost, the release, or at least partial release, of information and of cultural life from government controls. The floodgate had opened. If one only considers that in the years 1988 to 1991, some 900 new periodicals appeared in the former Soviet Union, one cannot underestimate the importance of the printed word and the power of literacy.

It is most ironic that in a state which, in its beginnings, had placed a high value on literacy, people felt such a hunger for information. When Lenin was forming that state, he projected to create a model society of the proletariat, the working class. The largely illiterate masses were to be made literate. This was achieved within two decades and proved to be the greatest and most long reaching achievement of the whole experiment. Lenin entrusted the supervision of this work to his wife, N. Krupskaya, and to the Education Minister, A.V. Lunacharsky. Success was made possible by three factors: free education, a zealous movement of the young and ideologically fervent to go and teach reading and writing to the masses, and by the establishment of free libraries. The high degree of literacy among the people of the U.S.S.R. was regularly underscored by UNESCO statistics. A broader study by M.V. Kabatchenko and L.D. Yaskunikova in one UNESCO publication, *Eradicating Illiteracy*

*in the USSR. Literary Lessons* published in 1990, confirms this high degree of Soviet literacy.<sup>1</sup>

Certain aspects of this success story must be qualified, however. With utilitarian purposes in mind, with its Marxist view of education, with radically new values, Soviet leadership produced a new and specific type of a literate person. The stress on technologies and communist ideology produced the new *Soviet man*. This *homo sovieticus* did, indeed, know how to read and write. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, however, did not even camouflage the utilitarian purpose of this newfound literacy in the building of the socialist state.

Several Western scholars were interested in Soviet literacy and studied its characteristics. Some rejected Soviet statistics as untrustworthy, and it should be mentioned that UNESCO reports were based on Soviet sources. Maurice Friedberg, of the University of Illinois, was very skeptical of the Soviet claim of universal literacy. In his book, *Russian Culture of the 1980s*, he wrote, "Total liquidation of illiteracy belongs in the same category of claims as the non-existence of unemployment and, as an underground song of the 1960s mocked, the abolition of diabetes by law."<sup>2</sup>

Klaus Mehnert, and two British scholars, Jenny Brine and Gregory Walker, also researched Soviet readership and tried to determine how much and what the Soviet citizen read. In 1988, John Garrard and Amy Corning published the results of their study, "The Soviet Reader: New Data from the Soviet Interview Project."<sup>3</sup> This was interesting new information, based on interviews with about one thousand participants. Its drawback, which the authors acknowledged, was the fact that the study was done in the United Kingdom, on information gathered from a population of mostly Jewish emigrants who were very well educated, and thus, atypical of the general population. Due to the circumstances which existed in the Soviet Union, it was not easy to question the Soviet citizen in his own element, and to

obtain good information. Times have changed and new studies will certainly be forthcoming.

As it made its population literate, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union ensured for itself the right to control everything which pertained to literacy. Collectivization of lands and properties, achieved at the price of famines and Gulags, was paralleled by a systematic destruction of many of the most literate, the intellectuals. Traditionally considered to be a separate social class, the *intelligentsia*, as it was called, was seen as threatening to what was to be a classless society.

Especially dangerous was the *creative intelligentsia*, among whom the most numerous were the writers. Those who survived the Stalinist purges of the 1930s, had the choice of total conformity or silence. Conformity, for a good writer or artist was synonymous with reduction to banality. The excellent Ukrainian poet, Pavlo Tychyna, for example, wrote so differently after making concessions to the Party, that literary history speaks of him as of two people, the young Tychyna of the poem *Clarinets of the Sun* and the other Tychyna, of trivia and of panegyrics to Stalin. There were also chosen or imposed silences. The Russian poet, Anna Akhmatova, survived physically after writing her powerful *Requiem*, but did not publish again. In the times of Brezhnev, the most important contemporary Ukrainian lyricist, Lina Kostenko, was silent for more than ten years. Much literature was written "to be kept in the drawer," without hope of being read.

The various measures of control at the disposal of the Party frustrated and distorted the normal development of literature, historiography and even the sciences. The *intellectual workers*, to use the Soviet term, like those of collective farms and factories became part of their respective *kolektyvs*, of which the best known were the writers' unions.

Recalling these circumstances, one can appreciate the fact that the newly acquired literacy represented a dilemma for the Soviet citizen. The less individualism, the less asking of questions and searching for answers there was, the safer their lives would be. The government, with the many means it had at its disposal, monitored what was to be read at several levels, especially by controlling the publishing and distributions of materials. It should, perhaps, be mentioned that librarians were asked to keep the so-called *psychological profiles* of readers and thus they also contributed to these controls. The pastime of reading

could prove to be dangerous.

Nevertheless, even in such an atmosphere, reading was a popular activity. Turning to UNESCO statistics, our best source of comparative information on the matter, we find how they regularly underscored this high degree of readership in the USSR. Books, were inexpensive and private home collections grew in spite of the crowded living quarters. Much was written about the "prestigiousness" of books in the USSR. and Valeria D. Stelmakh stressed it her 1982 study *Books and the Mass Media: Modes of Interaction in the USSR*.<sup>4</sup> In comparison to other societies, Soviet citizens were, indeed, avid readers. The popularity of the book was not challenged until the massive invasion of Soviet homes by television sets, in the seventies and eighties.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which authorized every item published, inundated its citizens with the printed word. Much of it, however, was not what the reader would have liked to read. In *Living with Glasnost: Youth and Society in Changing Russia*, the authors refer to a survey taken in 1986:

"Only six out of then young people saw any real chance of developing their creative talents, and only half found their leisure to be of any cultural value. Two thirds complained that they could not get the books they wanted."<sup>5</sup> After the year 1988, even librarians admitted that their vast collections were rich in materials which no one wanted to read and that they were losing their readers.

As in the world of physics where for every action there is a reaction, Soviet readers acquired special skills to recognize the more interesting publications, to read "between the lines" of others. They learned to decode newspaper articles, to look for the really important news on the last page. Sometimes people stood in line to buy a book and sometimes they copied items, by hand and passed it on to others. This was especially true of poetry. Occasionally, a book could enjoy a demand equal to that of a pair of jeans or other highly desirable goods. Bulgakov's novel *The Devil and Margarita* even drew very respectable prices on the black market, for example. Unwillingly, Soviet controls of the printed word, cultivated a public eager to read that what the government only tolerated. Many even risked to read the forbidden, the underground publications, known collectively as *samvydav* in Ukrainian or *sami-zdat* in Russian.

This general background is important

when one concentrates on the subject of literacy of youth in Ukraine, as it is now, and on the factors which influenced it. A study of the reading habits of youth in a reforming society is to study a bubbling process. It is, of necessity, impressionistic, yet it may provide an insight into that society, facilitate analogies with others and help in better understanding of Eastern Europe, in general.

The population of Ukraine is one hundred percent literate, according to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.<sup>6</sup> This means that every person between the ages of nine and forty-nine knows how to read and write.

The youth of what was the second largest republic of the Soviet Union, was affected by all the above-mentioned factors and it had several additional problems of their own. Some of the first printing in the Cyrillic alphabet appeared in 1574, in its territory. Yet, the collective memory of the people holds the fact that in the nineteenth century, in the eastern and larger part of Ukraine which was part of tsarist Russia, there had been a prohibition of the Ukrainian printed word.<sup>7</sup> The Ukrainian book went underground and had to be published in Western Ukraine or even in Geneva or Vienna, and to be circulated illegally.<sup>8</sup>

As citizens of the Soviet Union, they saw the systematic attempt to let their culture, as well as that of several other non-Russian republics, atrophy. Lenin's theories of a multinational state had given assurances of equal blossoming of languages and cultures of all of the republics, but the reality was different. What could not be destroyed was destined to fade away into ethnographic quaintness.

The Ukrainian youth of today have many problems. They did not inherit a culture which had developed normally. The metaphor "stumps and sprouts" which serves as title for an anthology of poetry, can refer to the whole culture. The periods of *thaws* and *freezes* of control which characterized Soviet history, devastated culture. If Russians today are taking stock of the damages which their culture endured in the Soviet times, the other nations suffered all those and in addition, the heavy marks of Russification. This policy consisted in a reduction or at least strong attempt to reduce the cultures of half of the population of the Soviet Union to a second-rateness. We in the Western world who have been made sensitive by the theories of Claude Levi-Strauss on the validity of cultures, can appreciate the losses and the psychological damages of such margin-

alization.

It was practiced in various subtle, and some not too subtle, ways. All aspects of culture fell victim to it, especially the language. Besides being the official language of state, Russian was aggressively imposing itself in all aspects of life. The numbers of publications in Ukrainian decreased constantly, as those in Russian increased. All too often, a translation of a French or English novel into Ukrainian usually had to be done from a Russian translation rather than from the original. Russification was imposed methodically, and to oppose it was very dangerous, for how could one oppose the "language of Lenin"

Ukrainian youth, as all other non-Russian youth in the USSR, are bi-lingual. They usually read in two languages, their own and Russian. The study of other foreign languages has proven inadequate and, at the present time, there is a great demand for English, German and French. Of these English is the most desirable. Since the Rolling Stones and the Beatles had made holes in the "iron curtain," in the sixties, enough pop and rock music has seeped through to whet their appetite for things foreign. Rock music, blue jeans, T-shirts, and other influences of the American youth culture are omnipresent.

The Soviet education system had assured a basic ten-year program for all but those who were directed to trade schools after the eighth grade. It had well defined goals which were best served by a single textbook methodology, a heavy reliance on memorization and strong control of discussion in class. The importance of school libraries was not accented. The school librarian, typically an elderly woman, was in charge of the distribution of textbooks. The collection was usually small and contained only some popular classics. When one remembers that it had to serve students from the age of seven to seventeen, it is quite understandable that such a library was not too popular. Among the twenty persons interviewed on the subject, not one had a positive memory by their school library.

Much more prestigious and interesting places were and are the institutions called the regional children's libraries for younger children and the separate libraries for youth. They are in the cities and larger towns which serve as the twenty five regional centers of Ukraine. They were funded by the Ministry of Culture and many of them were the showplaces which were proudly shown to visiting foreign delegations.



They are very much enjoyed by their patrons although access to these libraries was often limited by the traveling distance. The collections for children are impressive.

In the libraries for youth the selections were not always what the young people would have really wanted to read, but they did offer the basic menu of all classics, their own and foreign, some adventure literature and science fiction. The popular Americans were James Fennimore Cooper, Jack London, Hemingway, and Theodore Dreiser. Conan Doyle, Georges Simenon and Agatha Christie were very much liked by the mystery fans.

It should be remembered that the whole of Soviet society was kept free of ideologically unacceptable materials. Until the last years of the existence of the state, it was quite puritanical in sexual matters. Thus books legally available to youth were always proper in these respects. Pornography was illegal material. Today, however, there seems to be a high demand for it and there is a good supply. Most is imported, but some is home grown. A touch of urbaneness which would have previously been rejected as contamination by the "decadent West," now characterizes many publications addressed to the general public.

At this point it would perhaps be helpful to explain the designation of the term "youth." From about the age of fourteen a child was considered a youth. The outer limit of this category is somewhat more difficult to determine and it could extend to about the age of twenty-four. At the same time it should be noted that, when compared to young persons of the same age, young people in all of Eastern Europe tend to be more mature, more serious. That perception of maturity and seriousness needs to be qualified.

Typically, that youth is a keener observer of the political and social scene. On the issue of ecological matters, a study by Ivan D. Zverev published in 1984, two years before Chornobyl, found that an overwhelming majority displayed a high degree of social maturity in their assessment of the problems of man's use and abuse of nature.<sup>9</sup>

At the same time that youth did not always show an equal degree of personal maturity. In "Put in a Word for the Poor Student,"<sup>10</sup> Vladimir Afanasief described a general attitude of dependency among the student population. This was, perhaps, an inevitable result of several factors. Education was free and the student even received a sti-

pend from the state. Secondly, there was little employment opportunity for young people. Finally, the general practice of early marriages, combined with the fact of housing shortages, forced the young to remain dependent on their parents for a long time.

Compared with their counterparts in the West, young people in Ukraine, read more. Recently, since 1988, they read even more. Whole new worlds have opened to them. Within their own world, the primary interest seemed to be to restore history, to fill in the *white spots* or forbidden topics. Soviet manipulation of history was so blatant, that a common cynical witticism which circulated claimed that "the Soviet Union was the only country in the world with an unpredictable past." Wilson and Bachmatov observed, "Generations of young people were systematically kept ignorant of the darker pages of Soviet history. Schools gave them the version of the moment, while parents who were witnesses or victims, generally kept silent."<sup>11</sup>

The guarded but progressive rehabilitation of authors who had been proscribed began in 1988. At the same time, some of the best and the worst of what the West has to offer was made available to them. This is an interesting time in which they have to rediscover their past and to open themselves towards the outside world simultaneously. It would be impossible to study the tastes and habits of a whole stratum of society without recognizing differences. Of course some young people read a lot, some a little, and some not at all. Most reading falls into the sphere of mass culture which affects everyone. Some aspects of literacy, by its very nature, involve more selective readers.

In 1968, the prominent and prolific writer, Oles Honchar published a novel titled *Sobor*, translated as *The Cathedral*. The novel enjoyed two editions in Ukraine and four outside of the country and left a profound mark on the youth of today.

Its action takes place in an industrial town of south-eastern Ukraine. An old church, which survived as a storage place for fodder, is marked for destruction by local bureaucrats. The most aggressive of these, a young jurist, is opposed by the student, Mykola Bahlai. Bahlai and his friends rally to prevent the demolition. They see in this old structure an old witness to the continuum of the life of a people and an expression of their gravitation towards the good and the beautiful. In the novel, there is no religious sentiment expressed, although Elka, a

girl of somewhat easy virtue, does go through a moral conversion in the shadow of that structure.

The powerful symbol of the old *sobor*, even defamed and closed as it was, cost the author his leadership in the Writer's Union of Ukraine, but it inspired the next generation. They identified with the young metallurgy student, Bahlai, who on his way home from the institute would stop on the square, "turn his head upwards and, as was his habit, would listen to the *sobor*, to its silence, and would hear that music of the spheres which is not audible to everyone."<sup>12</sup>

"Take care of the *sobors* of your souls,"<sup>13</sup> the author warned. The message found a resonance with many of the young. A rich, philosophical commentary on it, *Sobor under Scaffolding* by the critic E. Sverstiuk circulated as underground literature and increased the parameters of the influence of the novel. There is a subtle but clear continuum in progress. The young lyrical poet, Sofia Maidanska titled her 1993 collection *You Too, Enter This Sobor*.

Another important novelist and poet who shared with his reader and particularly the young reader, a very personal and spiritual world view was Oles Berdnyk. He wrote novels in a particular genre of science fiction. His *fantastyka*, as it was called, was rich in idealistic musings and represents a search for truth and virtue within the human being. His personal biography included two terms of imprisonment and exile. He was active in the Ukrainian Helsinki Group which tried to monitor the Soviet government's adherence to the international agreements on human rights which it had signed in Helsinki, in 1976. He exuded the aura of a moral leader. Even his striking appearance became emblematic of the guru or prophet that youth which had been raised in the spirit of dialectic materialism needed very much.

At some point his writing was forced underground and four of his novels appeared in the West and exerted their influence from the outside. Berdnyk fired the imagination of youth with a particular *back to the future* vision. His spirituality consisting of millenarism, futurism and extreme idealism rather than religious concepts, seemed to offer something unique and to compensate for whatever the youth was missing.

"Burst into flames.

The radiation from your hearts is needed.

Don't pass through life, like shadows,  
Like meteors into the unknown.  
And let new stars appear  
In the dark skies!  
For, as one sun fades, another one rises,  
As one planet dies, another sets out on its course!  
All of the atoms resemble each other,  
And irreplaceable is only the human soul..."<sup>14</sup>

A genuine idealism of youth broke through as one of the first signs of freedom permitted by glasnost. It became visible in what they read, in what they wrote and even in their organized movements. It should not be surprising that, as children of the Chernobyl tragedy Ukrainian youth rallied around the cause of ecology. In the various movements to save the planet, from informal ones to an organized political party, known as the Green Party, they vent their frustration and anger at this cataclysmic accident.

As the parameters for political expression increased, youth, particularly the students, organized, published their own press and drew up their own demands of the government. In October of 1990, the students' tent-village in the center of Kiev was an unprecedented event. Their platform, their hunger strike, their good behavior won the sympathy of the people and concessions from the government. What should not be forgotten was that in that eleventh hour of the Soviet government, they were very vulnerable indeed, and could easily have been arrested. They put their lives at risk and were prepared for even the extreme measures of suicide. The government, thought it more expedient to act democratically and acquiesced to their demands. The triumph of this event gave a great moral uplift to the participants and to all youth.<sup>15</sup>

In the Soviet Union, youth always had its own press, that is press addressed to them. These were official publications, and some of them were quite large, as for example the newspaper *Molod Ukrainy* (*Youth of Ukraine*) which came out in the city of Kharkiv, five times per week, in huge runs of 750,000 with a counterpart published in Russian in runs of 250,000. Such dreary press was the reason why so many new periodicals were established after 1988. Youth, more than anyone else even needed their own freer press and a vibrant and

vital journalism mushroomed at the first opportunity. In the days of *glasnost*, at the age of 24, Aleksander Kryvenko had published a semi-legal newspaper which survived for about a year and half, with about 20,000 subscribers. Recently it reemerged and is of great interest to the general public. The original name *Postup*, (*Progress*) has been changed to *Post-Postup*.

In the last several years, the general press is getting more diverse. Young people were finding in it more and more of what was of interest to them. A landmark event was the publication of the January 1991 issue of a monthly journal named *Suchasnist* (*Contemporariness*). It contained the novella, *Reaktsii* (*Reactions*) by an excellent author, Yurii Andruchovych. Even ninth and tenth graders were reading it, passing it along, paying high prices for a copy. If many of the older generation were shocked by this new type of realism, the youth loved its urbaneness and recognized their own language and their slang in it.

The wish to know the West and to belong to the rest of the world is very strong after so much isolation. They imitate, adapt and they create original art. Normally music would be a field quite apart from literacy, but the nature of the *estradna muzyka* which became popular in the late 1980s legitimizes its inclusion.

On intimate stages and in large stadiums, there blossomed a genre which was both music and literature. It can be best described as poetry which became music. Its creators, popularly referred to as *bardy* or bards, are young people who reached into various sources pop, rock, jazz and folk music and produced several types of songs which broke the stereotype of romantic sentimentality to which Ukrainian songs had been reduced. Their satire is courageous and biting. Both the humor and the pain these songs express draw the people around them. These bards are Victor Morozov, Andrii Panchyshyn, Taras Chubai and several others. Most make social or political statements, while some, especially the songs authored by Stefan Vorobets, border on erotica. The usual accompaniment was the guitar or the bandura, but there were also drums, synthesizer and all the trappings of rock groups. The concerts and the three festivals of this music, in 1989, 1991 and 1993, were truly festivals of an unleashed spirit. Whatever they may represent musically, they feature poetry which wants to be louder and to extend itself to more people. The next festival in the series will take place in

1995.

A more exclusive, but also "staged" vehicle for the written word for Ukrainian youth today is the theater. The traditional youth theaters, or theaters of the young viewer, as they are called, serve the younger adults. They became the venue for literary events and, as such, have to be mentioned. The "Molodizhnyi Teater" (Youth Theater) of Lviv, for example, introduced its audiences to major works, which the poet Lina Kostenko held secret during the ten years of her silence. *Marusia Churai*, based on the historic epos of the seventeenth century, was very popular and successful, as was the *Garden of Unmelting Statues*. In the tradition of all of Eastern Europe, poetry readings are cultural events of great importance. It is from the stage of that theater that the youth of the city of Lviv, first heard the poetry of Vasyl Stus, a martyred young genius who died in Siberia, in 1984. For the youth of Ukraine, the theater is an extension of what they read, an integral part of their literacy.

When asked what they most enjoyed reading, a typical young man or woman would usually name historical fiction. Two favorite authors are Roman Ivanychuk and Pavlo Zahrebelny. Their works, often serialized in the journals before they appear in book form, are avidly read by all. Also, the young people genuinely like Fennimore Cooper, Balzac, Dumas and Maupassant and seem to have a deeper understanding of them compared to our youth. Raised with a reverence for the classics, their own and foreign, they are able to draw more out of these authors and to appreciate them more.

If it appears that Ukrainian youth is "high brow" in its reading habits, it is due to the fact that there was and still is a lack of other good literature. There is little adventure fiction or interesting biography, few mystery novels or travelogues. There was and is a high demand for translations of American best-sellers. The journal *Vsesvit* (*The Universe*) serialized Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*. Irving Shaw's *Rich Man, Poor Man* was very popular also, as was *Thornbirds* which appeared in print after the film made its rounds. In other words, they are avid readers of "lower brow" materials, if they can get it.

The current practice of "video piratstvo," the copying of foreign video cassettes has, in the last years, made the American film accessible to the public. Legal impropriety notwithstanding, this procedure finally offers them something other than the "B" films which they were



supplied with before, and thus, gives them a better knowledge of American culture.

In making an assessment of what is read or not read by youth in Ukraine today, it becomes clear that there is a lack of a middle level, entertainment or escapist literature. Between the iconostasis of the classics, and the triviality of pornography there are many levels of fiction, non-fiction, biography or travelogue which would interest and entertain them. It is a void which needs to be filled.

They are curious about themselves and the outside world. They read a lot and this reading helps them to search for a synthesis of diametrically opposed influences of their sheltered past and the modern Western world. The culture which they inherit has been frustrated in its growth and needs healing. There are many stumps but the new shoots are vigorous and healthy. Writers, poets and bards were of great importance to them in the past, and will certainly be with them in the future.

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# Literacy Without Libraries: Promoting Literacy Among School Children in Nigeria

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How does one help children develop literacy where they have limited access to books and libraries? How can one overcome the many obstacles to literacy faced by schoolchildren in Nigeria?

## Background to Literacy

Literacy, defined as the ability to read and write, is a relatively recent phenomenon in Nigeria, as in many developing countries. Oral traditions characterized the past. Literacy was introduced through the propagation of the new religions and the colonial experience. While Nigerian languages were put into written forms as part of this development, literacy has largely been associated with the English language. Formal school systems were also introduced by the new religions and the colonial government. These have expanded rapidly, especially since the attainment of independence in 1960.

Convinced of the importance of literacy for development, the Nigerian government has invested heavily in education at all levels. State governments spend between 30% and 40% of their budgets on education, while local governments charged with responsibility for primary education spend even more (Arifayan 1993). Yet in spite of the recognized desirability of literacy, its achievement has not been easy. While education has expanded dramatically, many still do not receive formal education. And education has not expanded without overstressing facilities, leading to a much decried fall in standards. The literacy rate has increased only slightly over the past few decades, to 38% in 1991, and many children leave school without learning to read and write. Why has the development of literacy proved so difficult?

## Obstacles to Literacy

There are a number of obstacles to literacy facing schoolchildren in Nigeria. These include a range of socio-cultural factors, the second language problem, the nature of the educational system, and lack of access to books

and other resources for reading.

## Socio-cultural factors

There are a range of socio-cultural factors affecting the development of literacy. Nigerian cultures are traditionally oral cultures, upon which an alien print culture has been superimposed. According to Fanoiki (1985,35) "our culture and tradition have been built on literature as storytelling, anecdotes, recounting of festivals." Recreation traditionally takes oral and social forms (Ogunsheye 1972), and the high value placed on sociability discourages a solitary activity like reading. Alemna (1986, 68) attributes the poor reading habits of children to "the difficulty of an individual socialized into the oral medium of communication to transfer to the reading medium." Because of this oral background, parents are unlikely to read to their children even if they can do so. Storytelling is the predominant form of literary mediation for parents, literate and illiterate alike.

Secondly the illiteracy of parents hinders reading development. The foundations of reading development are laid in the early years of life. Early childhood experiences with books, as well as spoken language, prepare children for reading even before they learn to read themselves. But the majority of Nigerian parents are not literate. Because of this they cannot serve as role models for reading, nor can they share books with their children by reading aloud to them. They are unlikely to provide exposure to books by having them in the home, giving them as gifts or taking children to libraries. For these reasons children miss early childhood experiences with books and reading and encounter both only when they start school.

Current economic conditions are detrimental to the development of literacy in several ways. Most directly, poverty may prevent parents from sending their children to school, thereby depriving them of formal literacy education. If the children attend school, parents may not be able to afford the textbooks, not to

mention books for voluntary reading.

Poverty affects literacy in less direct ways as well. Schoolchildren may be distracted by hunger or overcome by fatigue. Their after school hours may be filled with domestic chores or outside work, leaving them no time for assignments or reading. A deteriorating economy also creates harassed and distracted adults who are less able to provide traditional care and education for their children, thereby weakening the foundations for learning in school.

### **The Second Language Problem and Mother Tongue Education**

The second language problem is basic to the development of literacy by Nigerian schoolchildren. Children come to school speaking one language, their mother tongue, but in school they are introduced to a second language, English, as the medium of literacy and instruction. This means they are faced with two tasks at once; learning an unfamiliar language and learning to read. While they continue to communicate in their mother tongue outside the classroom, they may never attain literacy in it, since the emphasis is all on English. Even so, the majority of pupils also fail to attain permanent literacy in English by the end of primary school.

A number of educators have concluded that the problem lies with the use of a second language as the medium of instruction in the early years of primary school and advocate instead the use of the mother tongue. In this way children learning to read can build on the oral foundation of early childhood as beginning readers normally do. Since they would be learning in the language they know, learning would be more effective and the transition to written language more firmly grounded. Mother tongue education for the first three years of primary school is stipulated by the National Policy on Education (Nigeria 1981), and recent moves have been made to implement this more fully. The life experiment in which Yoruba was used as the medium of instruction throughout primary school and English taught as a subject, attempted to establish the efficacy of education in the mother tongue (Afolayan 1976).

Objections, however, have been raised to mother tongue education. Some question whether it has really been established that one learns better in the mother tongue, whether, for instance, the Life experiment was a success. Others point to the practical problems. It is

difficult to carry out the policy where there is a multiplicity of minority languages, as in Nigeria with its estimated 300 or more, or where there are many dialects of a language. Moreover, there are almost no teaching materials, even in the major languages. Still others point out the need for a language of wider communication, for further education and for unity within the country and interaction with the world.

As a result of these problems, some would advocate going straight into English or switching over as soon as possible. But primary education in English has not proved every effective in Nigeria. Children come to school knowing only their mother tongue, yet are expected to learn in a language they do not understand. Perhaps the biggest obstacle to learning English and learning in English is that many teachers themselves have not mastered the language. They are more comfortable speaking their own language, and do so except when dictating notes from the board or reading class texts. As a result pupils merely memorize the notes without understanding. They lack the opportunities for speaking and reading that would lead to the mastery of the language.

### **The Educational System**

Not only the language of instruction but the educational system as a whole presents obstacles to the development of literacy. A system characterized by rote memorization and regurgitation of facts does not encourage the development of readers. Children have only to memorize the lesson notes or basic textbook to pass their exams in a subject. They never acquire the skills for extracting relevant information from a variety of sources or the habit of reading widely for information and pleasure. "Reading" is conceived of very narrowly as memorizing notes for school exams; therefore, the need for it ceases when the last exam is passed. Education is not seen as a broad or continuing process, reaching out in different directions and lasting throughout life.

Arifayan (1993) among others has cited the teaching methods employed from kindergarten to the university as the main reasons Nigerians are not a reading public.

Unoh (1968) has also cited the methods employed in teaching reading as an obstacle to literacy. The look-and-say method follows a similar pattern of memorization, focusing attention on single words without gathering up the thought sequences of the passages.

The content of the curriculum can also

serve as an obstacle to literacy. The focus is narrow, centered on a few topics repeated year after year. As a result children lack the broader background knowledge which would help them understand what they read. Promotion of literacy is, therefore, tied to improvement of education, so that it will foster rather than obstruct its development.

#### **Access to Books and Libraries**

Limited access to books and other reading materials is another major obstacle to literacy among Nigerian schoolchildren. Mention has already been made to the lack of books in most homes. There are also few books in the schools. According to a recent World Bank study report (Arifayan 1993, 7):

less than one per cent of primary school pupils in Nigeria have access to textbooks. This means that less than one out of every hundred pupils in the country could lay hands on the textbooks needed to give them the basic foundation in education.

This dismal picture is supported by observations at Nsukka; one observer reported seeing only one textbook, this is in the hands of a teacher, during a three-week stay in a primary school.

Children have little access to books through libraries. As an example, in 1987 Anambra State, with an estimated population of two million children under fourteen years, had a total of 2,271 children registered as borrowers with the eleven public libraries in the state system. As of 1990 the State Central Library in Enugu had only 3000 volumes in its children's library. The Nsukka Divisional Library, recently reopened after more than a decade, has about 100 books for children.

Primary school libraries are also few and far between. During the 1986 Anambra State Best School Library Competition, only 30 primary school libraries were located in the 2,071 primary schools in the state. Not one was found in the Nsukka educational zone. (Anambra State School Libraries Association 1987) Over the country as a whole, primary school libraries are usually found in private schools, not in the vast majority of public schools.

There are few books on the market, either in the occasional standard book shop or

in the ubiquitous market stalls. The drastic fall in the value of the national currency since 1986 has reduced the number of foreign children's books to a trickle. The deterioration of the economy has likewise affected local publishing, which was just finding its feet in the more prosperous days of the 1970s and early 1980s. While new titles still do come out, many earlier published ones are no longer available.

Aside from the question of availability, the published output for Nigerian children is limited. Since 1960 Nigeria has built up a modest body of juvenile fiction in English. If these several hundred titles were available, they would represent a good start toward meeting the needs of schoolchildren. The late 1970s and early 1980s also saw an outpouring of titles for youth and the appearance of a few picture book for younger children. More of all these are needed, in addition to reference books, nonfiction topic books, and books in the Nigerian languages.

These, then, are some of the obstacles to literacy. They include such socio-cultural factors as the relatively recent introduction of literacy into an oral culture, the illiteracy of parents, widespread and deepening poverty; the use of a second language for literacy and instruction; the nature of the educational system; and the limited access children have to books and libraries.

#### **Projects with Nsukka Schoolchildren**

Having examined the problem, where do we begin to look for solutions? I propose to begin by looking at several small projects with upper primary schoolchildren in Nsukka, a town in Igbo-speaking area of eastern Nigeria. In most cases these involved staff and students of the Department of Library Science, University of Nigeria using the resources of the Children's Center Library, a voluntary library organized by the University Women's Association. These projects might give us further insight into the nature of the problem and suggest ways literacy might be promoted.

The projects are as follows:

##### **1. Story Hours**

Since 1988 students of the Department have been visiting primary schools in Nsukka town and nearby villages to conduct story hours and book sharing sessions. Pairs of students conduct a story hour of thirty to forty minutes in Igbo and English, the balance depending on the language of the storytellers and the English comprehension of the children. The story hour



includes stories, poems, riddles and songs and the sharing of picture books and science magazines. They are structured around themes, such as animals or countries of the world, with the intention of enriching the education received in the classroom. Their purpose is also to foster the enjoyment of oral and written literature and encourage the use of books and other library materials for both information and pleasure.

## **2. Library Lessons**

Staff of the Department of Library Science have conducted library lessons for fifth and sixth grade pupils of the same schools, in this case bringing them to the Children's Center Library. This has taken several forms but emphasis is on learning how to use library materials through activities and projects. The one analyzed for this paper involved learning about various animals using nonfiction topic books, nature magazines and junior encyclopedias. Work sheets of questions were distributed to help guide the search, with sample questions including: Where does the animal live? What does it eat? Where did you get the information? Pupils were also asked to draw a picture of the animal and write three things about it. The aims were to evaluate their comprehension and learning skills as well as the appropriateness of the library collection in relation to their reading ability.

## **3. Studies of Reading Interests**

Two library science students have conducted recent studies of reading interests in two Nsukka primary schools. In 1993 Nkiru Ezech carried out a study of the reading habits of primary five pupils using interview and observation during four book sharing sessions. Areas investigated included the family background, sources of books, reading level and the types of books preferred. This year Ndidi Nwankwo investigated the response of primary five pupils to picture books. She set out to discover what children like in books, how well they understand books in English and what things about the language attract them, what style of illustrations they prefer and how well they can interpret the pictures, and what types of stories and characters appeal to them.

## **4. Traditional and Modern Media in Literary Socialization**

A related study of interest is the PhD thesis of Obiajulu Emejulu on Traditional and Modern Media in the Literary Socialization of Selected Nigerian Children (University of Ibadan, 1990). The researcher selected urban

and rural settings in Anambra and Oyo States, looking at twenty eight primary schools (including six in Nsukka), four libraries (including the Children's Center Library), playgrounds, and the mass media. The study examined the role of traditional media such as stories, play and songs, and modern media such as television in the socialization process; the contributions of schools, libraries and playgrounds as settings; the mediators of activities; and the patterns and strategies of literary mediation.

What can we learn from these studies?

## **Observations on Access to Resources**

First, what access do children at Nsukka have to resources for literacy in terms of books and libraries, cultural resources, and audiovisual and modern media?

### **1. Books and Libraries**

Children at Nsukka, like most Nigerian schoolchildren, have limited access to books and libraries. Almost two thirds (65.4%) of the children Emejulu interviewed in Anambra State had never been to a library to borrow books. Of those who had, about equal numbers had used school libraries (21.1%) and the two public/children's libraries in the vicinity (20.5%). Of the 13 selected schools, two had a modest library, one had a revolving class library for pupils who had contributed books, two had a few books in the head of school's office, and eight had no library provision of any kind. This report and others (Bozimo 1983) suggest that school libraries, where they exist, are the principal source of books for Nigerian schoolchildren.

But where do children in the typical public school without a library get books? All the children in Ezech's study received books from their parents, but these were limited to school texts and exercise books. Only three out of the thirty were also given recreational reading materials by parents. The most important source of recreational books proved to be friends. Almost half of the children (46.7%), most of them girls, shared books within a network of friends, with the result that the few storybooks received from parents and the public library had a far wider circulation. Bozimo (1983), who studied reading habits at the Ahmadu Bello University staff school, likewise found friends to be an important second source for reading materials (after the school library), especially among the girls. The third source was the nearby public library, which was a source of books for five children. Even though

its collection of one hundred books was very small, this source was underutilized by the children.

## **2. Cultural resources**

Cultural resources are vital to a child's socialization, both in their own right and in laying the foundation for reading. Emejulu's study indicates that cultural resources remain very much a part of children's lives. The children knew and shared oral literature in the form of lullabies, proverbs, tongue twisters, riddles, songs, and of course stories. The greater number of these were in Nigerian languages, but some were also in English. Storytelling was alive and well. Almost all the school children (99%) reported hearing stories, the exception being the few househelps attending the school. Similarly, Ezech found that 93.3% of the children were told stories by their parents. (Conversely, only 10% of the parents read stories to their children, even though over half of them were teachers.) Interestingly Emejulu found that peers as well as parents played a major role in mediating stories (61.2%), lullabies (24.4%) and dances and games (47%), among others.

However, schools and libraries played almost no role at all. Most storytelling and traditional play forms took place in informal settings such as homes and playgrounds and were mediated by parents, other family members and peers. Only half of the children ever heard stories from their teachers, usually as an occasional time filler after exams had ended rather than as part of a regular educational program. Given the importance of cultural resources and the enthusiasm of children for them, this represents a gap and an opportunity.

## **3. Audiovisual and modern media**

Pictures are vital to a child's development of visual and verbal imagination. Exposure to pictures develops skills necessary for reading as well as interpreting a range of visual media. Yet there is evidence of inadequacy in the visual education of the children. This is ironic given the rich artistic traditions of many Nigerian cultures, including Igbo culture. Emejulu found that audiovisual and other nonbook media did not feature in literary mediation programs in most schools and libraries. And while art may be on the timetable, the occasional art class usually consists of children being required to copy a model as closely as possible. Perhaps this explains why the children in Nwankwo's study found it difficult to interpret pictures unless

they were clear and simple depictions of familiar everyday experiences and objects.

A detailed look at modern media is beyond the scope of this paper. Most primary schools lack electricity and very few have any media requiring equipment. However, such media as audio cassettes, videotapes, radio and television are common in the society. An interesting finding of Emejulu was that more children view television (90.4%) than listen to radio (48%), even though radios were much more accessible to them. They did not seem to consider radio a medium relevant to children, while they demonstrated a keen interest in television programs and had definite ideas about their favorites. In light of this, much more could be done in terms of adapting traditional and modern literary forms to television, as was done in the case of Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*.

## **Observation on Reading Level and Response to Books**

What can we learn from these studies about the children's reading level and response to books?

### **Reading Level**

First, the children respond positively to books. They enthusiastically welcome literary experiences and enjoy looking at books. But language problems and their limited reading ability quickly become apparent. In the words of one story hour report:

Although the children found the jokes quite amusing and the stories exhilarating, it was quite a task having them draw any reasonable inference or lessons from them and have this communicated in English. Even when asked to speak in Igbo there still was little response from the pupils. No doubt the pupils showed genuine interest in the books given out to them to read, but most were incapable of reading. The few who did read were unable to interpret what they read. Most were content with merely looking at the pictures in the books.

On the whole, the pupils displayed remarkable intellect when the level of communication became Igbo and when the discussion was centered around things of everyday life in their surroundings. Their enthusiasm for books and

reading was also pronounced but their reading and comprehension ability was much too low for their level and showed they have been introduced to reading (if at all) much too late.

In her study of reading habits, Ezech also found that the children showed enthusiasm for reading when books were shared out to them but found it difficult to sustain interest if they encountered too many unfamiliar words. Half of the children (eleven out of fifteen being girls) read picture books well and understood what they read. The other half read with difficulty and understood little or nothing. Concerning reading rate, seventeen were able to complete only one picture book in the hour, ten read two books, and three read three books. Only two of the girls selected juvenile novels to read. In terms of comprehension and speed, girls were the better readers; they were also most likely to be voluntary readers.

The library lessons at the Children's Centre Library also revealed a wide range in reading ability, although even the best were beginning readers. A few (eight out of forty eight, or 16.7%) successfully completed the worksheet on animals, with scores of 90 to 100%. On the other hand, a significant number (eleven out of forty eight, or 22.9%) comprehended very little, with scores of under 40%. These pupils copied a few words out of context or copied someone else's responses about another animal. Some appeared to tire or give up, leaving the last answers blank. The average score was 62.9%. Only a few were able to go beyond the most straightforward questions, by for instance, picking out a striking characteristic of an animal, such as the size of a whale or long neck of a giraffe.

### Background Knowledge

One observation made was that the pupils showed very limited background knowledge and this hindered comprehension. For instance, many had not idea of the continents and what animals were likely to be found where. As a result, they identified cheetahs as being found in Europe, reindeer and elephants in South America, and kangaroos, camels and tigers in North America. Only 27 of the children, of 56.3% were able to identify the home continent of the animals. It was also interesting that they demonstrated no greater familiarity with African than non-African animals, even attaining a higher average score for non-African animals, (7.38 compared to 6.44). The best papers were on giraffes, zebras, elephants and whales, bears, wolves, and the

worst papers were similarly divided. This could be partly due to the fact that some of these African animals are not found in Nigeria or are rarely seen. The animals they indicated familiarity with were local domestic animals like cats, pigs, rabbits, monkeys and fish.

This has implications for the curriculum and library programs. If the curriculum were broadened or pupil's background knowledge extended through library programs, they would bring greater resources to the written word and be more likely to understand what they read.

### Familiarity as an Aid to Comprehension

Related to this is Ezech's observation that children's reading preferences were strongly influenced by the need to understand. Their favorite types were folktales and Bible stories. When asked why they liked these stories, they responded:

the story is familiar	43.3%
I understand the story	30%
the story teaches a lesson	26.7%

Folktales are likely to be familiar to children because of the strong storytelling tradition in the culture. Even if the folktale is from another culture, the story patterns are likely to be familiar. Bible stories are known to the children through church and Sunday school and Christian religious knowledge, a primary school subject. Both folktales and Bible stories have strong moral lessons, another expectation children bring to their reading, deriving in part from the oral tradition.

Previous studies (Odejide and James 1979) had found it difficult to ascertain whether children preferred African or non-African titles because of the paucity of African ones. But this study, which included equal numbers of the two, found a strong preference for books with African background (63.3%). Those who chose non-African books were likely to be poor readers attracted by the colorful illustrations and limited text of foreign picture books. When African and non-African books on the same theme were paired, children found it easier to understand the African version. For example, they understood and enjoyed the Nigerian picture book *Only Bread for Eze* more than *Bread and Jam for Frances*.

### Literacy in the Mother Tongue

This preference for local background did not, however, extend to language. Almost all (90%) of the children preferred books in English to those in Igbo. There are a number of factors

which might influence this preference. The Igbo language children's books are very few, so there is limited selection. Most lack colorful illustrations. Children may have trouble reading Igbo because they are switched to English before mastering the written language. Moreover, the reading level is often too advanced and dialectical differences make reading difficult. There is almost nothing in Igbo at the beginning levels, which would be appropriate for children learning to read.

### Visual Literacy

It is often felt that children use the pictures to help them understand the story. But Nwankwo found the children in her study needed to hear the story in order to interpret the pictures. Only very clear and colorful illustrations on themes from everyday life could be easily understood. These included *Emeka's Dog*, a Nigerian beginning reader describing how a cat's eyes are different from ours; *Izzard*, the story of a boy from the Virgin Islands and his pet lizard; and *The Poky Little Puppy*, who dug a hole under the fence and went out to see the wide world. All have naturalistic illustrations in full color. However, the children misinterpreted many of the pictures in *Horton the Elephant* with its cartoon art and combination of foreign and fantastic elements, and *Madeleine* with its foreign setting and distorted figures. They were confused by the depiction of fantasy in *Where the Wild Things Are* and could make little of the abstract drawings in *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* even though it is a Nigerian story and the animals depicted are familiar ones.

It might be noted that African and non-African pictures and stories could both be understood as long as they featured familiar, everyday experiences, as with common pets, and had fairly naturalistic illustrations. But books with distinctly foreign settings and elements of fantasy were difficult to understand, as was abstract and cartoon art. This is not surprising if we consider the limited experience the children have with pictures and their limited background knowledge.

### Conclusion: What Can Be Done?

It has been seen that children are hungry for books and respond enthusiastically to them. They are eager to read and learn from books. Yet many obstacles stand in their way. Our task is to find ways to build on that enthusiasm and enable them to become literate. How might this be done?

### 1. Providing books

Children cannot learn to read if there is nothing for them to read. A basic step toward literacy is, therefore, provision of books. Nigerian children need:

- books which are based in their culture, in the languages they speak and reflecting their culture and environment;
- books which relate to the world around them, beginning with the familiar and leading beyond to new knowledge;
- books which they can understand, at beginning reading levels in both English and Nigerian languages;
- books with illustrations which will enhance their understanding of the text and develop visual literacy skills;
- books which appeal to them.

Which books appeal to Nigerian schoolchildren? These studies provide a few hints. They enjoy humorous stories, the language of fun of *Tikki Tikki Tembo* and absurd situations in *Why Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing*. They like stories with a clear sense of morality, in which justice is done, the down-trodden triumph, the wicked are punished. They like books with many colorful and clear illustrations. They like to read stories, but especially familiar stories they can understand: folktales, Bible stories, and stories of everyday life.

But how can these books be provided for children? This paper has suggested the importance of libraries in making books accessible to children. It is certainly much easier to promote literacy with libraries than without them! So one strategy is to find ways of establishing and equipping libraries for school children, if not in the school at least within reach. A current World Bank project represents an effort in this direction, with books being sent to schools and a model library established in each local government area. The Childrens Centre Library and Abadina Media Resource Centre are already established libraries providing services to schools in their localities.

Ways also need to be found to provide local books for children. Another paper would be needed to examine the problems of book production, but I will mention one project initiated by school librarians and others. The IBBY, Nigerian Section, assisted by funding from Unesco has been working to produce a series of non-fiction titles reflecting the local culture and environment. These are on a number of topics



in the areas of culture (marriage, naming ceremonies), history and geography (the Niger River, seasons), and science and technology (trees, computers). They will be a step toward filling a major gap, providing books both for teaching/learning experiences and voluntary reading. Another approach is to organize workshops to create materials at the school or local government level. Experience has shown that teachers produce beautiful teaching resources during their student days or on special occasions, but this is not translated into better resources for day-to-day teaching. Ways could be found to provide the motivation and materials, to teachers, librarians, and pupils, to create resources for learning.

## **2. Changes in education**

Literacy could be promoted by changes in education. First, if the curriculum could be broadened to extend the knowledge and experience of schoolchildren, they would bring a richer background to reading which would aid comprehension. This is the aim of the story hour and library lesson programs described in this paper and of the Abadina Media Resource Centre library use education program (Ogunsheye 1987, Appendix 1).

Secondly, current teaching methods are not conducive to literacy. The pattern of rote memorization of lesson notes does not foster reading with understanding and does not encourage wide reading or the development of reading skills. Yet, while this is the common method, the National Policy on Education advocates something very different. The key then is to find ways to implement the policy's vision of an education which is learner centered and resource based. This can be done through teacher education, workshops for teachers already in the field, and provision of school libraries to provide the necessary learning resources to support these methods. Implementing this educational approach would be a step toward creating good readers.

Thirdly, solutions need to be found to the language problem in Nigerian schools. The present practice seems to offer the worst of both worlds. Many children fail to attain permanent literacy in either English or the mother tongue, and as a result, fail to learn in school. Efforts to promote literacy are hindered by the failure or inability to draw on the resources of oral literature or the spoken language background of the children. However the language problem is resolved, teaching children to read in a language they do not understand does them a

great disservice. Literacy in the mother tongue must be taken seriously, with the necessary materials provided, and ways must be found for children to master English in both spoken and written forms.

## **3. Literary Mediation**

The above factors indicate the need for a strong program of literary mediation to encourage children in their efforts toward literacy. Such programs are especially important given the low reading level of many pupils, the difficulties posed by reading in a second language, and the limited materials available for reading. School libraries and schools could do much more that they are doing at present. Emejulu found that only four out of twenty eight schools had library periods for literary mediation activities. Only about half of the children were told stories by their teachers, and this only occasionally. Mediation of oral traditions and other cultural resources took place primarily in informal settings, not in schools and libraries. Yet cultural arts are included in the national curriculum and there is provision for cultural activities in the timetable.

One school has what might be a model for literary mediation in its reading/story club. Held in a classroom well appointed with graphic displays, the club features storytelling and reading aloud, by either the teacher leading the club or by members. The club encourages members to read widely on their own to "gain a passport to the world." Members are also encouraged to bring books from home which can be read by all and discussed. This idea relates to the circulation class libraries built up by pupils in several schools and informal networks of book exchange among friends, both of which utilize the peer group to promote literacy. Mediation by teachers and pairing of pupils for reading are also ways of bringing along weaker readers.

Sometimes the problems standing in the way of literacy seem daunting. The obstacles are so many and the resources for overcoming them often so few. Yet the solutions are known. It is true they entail substantial change and considerable, massive government support for book production and libraries, a transformation of the educational system, reorientation of teachers. But fortunately it is also possible to move bit by bit, taking small steps to provide books and create resources, conducting workshop, working with teachers and librarians. When I remember the faces of children and their eagerness for books and reading, it seems worth

continuing the struggle for literacy, with or without school libraries.

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# Picking a Winner: Children as Judges and Evaluators of Picture Books--the Irma S. and James H. Black Book Award

by  
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## Introduction

Discussions of fairness. Debates about peer pressure. The meaning of the word "subjective". An examination of the reading habits of seven-year-olds. The economics of the publishing industry. Who would imagine that having children be a part of the process of selecting the recipient of a major book award could lead to discussions of issues like these? But that is just what routinely happens each year at the Bank Street School for Children.

As the number of children's books published each year climbs, the number of awards given to children's books increases as well. Most publisher's catalogs proudly list their award-winning titles right up front as selling points. Many of these awards, however, are selected by adult "experts" in the field. The "Irma S. and James H. Black Award" is one notable exception to the rule. This award, formerly the "Irma Simonton Black Award," has always involved children in the selection process. And more recently, children play an increasingly important role.

This is as it should be. Children's books are meant to be read and appreciated by children. Too often we underestimate their taste and their ability to appraise. We assume that given the choice, a child will select a comic book over a more substantial work. And while that might sometimes be true, when children are meaningfully involved in a process, they can be discerning critical evaluators of literature.

The Bank Street School for Children is an independent school located on the Upper West Side of New York City that serves children from the age of three through fourteen (the eighth grade). The school itself is divided into three subdivisions for administrative purposes and the classrooms are inter-age grouped. For the purposes of the process, when I assumed responsibility for administering the award, I decided to work extensively with the eight-, nine- and ten-year-olds in the middle school. These youngsters still enjoy hearing a picture book read to them and most of them have the read-

ing skills to read many of the selections on their own as well. This is also a group that has become well versed in the practice of evaluation both in the classroom and as part of the library program. In both settings children are often asked to report on the books that they are reading and to tell why they do or do not like the story. They are asked to identify what it is about the story that doesn't work for them or that they find unappealing. They are asked to compare a story to others they have read, to identify recurrent themes, to discern genres and not particular characteristics about them. The children are enthusiastic participants in these sessions.

Often I will bring to the library session a book that adults have questions about. Will children understand the plot or message of the particular story? Do they enjoy the book? Is it too old for the supposed audience, or too young? The adults on the Child Study Children's Book Committee at Bank Street College, to which I belong, are often divided on the answer to these questions, so I bring the book to "the source" for a different perspective.

One thing that I have found is that children of all ages continue to enjoy being read to. Even the ten-year-olds will complain if I haven't read a story to them for a number of weeks. So sharing a book about which there is some question is easy. What is harder is to get the children to acknowledge when something is not working for them. Too often, they are reluctant to "hurt the feelings" of the reader by admitting that they did not really find a story enjoyable. That was something I had to work on very hard with them. Fortunately, by the time we began working together on the Black award, the children had become used to the idea of giving not only their genuine opinions but also the reasons for them.

In 1989 I assumed primary responsibility for the selection of the Black award. Coincidentally, at about the time that I began working on the award process, the teachers in the middle school were beginning reading re-

sponse groups as part of their whole language literature program. As members of these response groups, children are asked to assume increasingly more responsibility for their choice of what to read together, to lead their own discussions about the literature selection, and so on.

### **The Evaluation Process**

On the Child Study Children's Book Committee, members read books each week and then meet to discuss and recommend or reject what they have read. A recommended book is read by a second member who has to agree before the book is listed on our Books of the Year list. When I began working on the award, I decided to follow the same model with the children. I invited four children from each of the four classrooms to meet with me weekly to read and discuss the books sent in by the publishers or identified by me as possible candidates. I eliminated from consideration only those items that were clearly not appropriate--books for children much too young or much too old, books that had no text and books that had no pictures. I then invited the children to choose books to take home and read and report back on the following week. We had nearly two hundred books to consider and less than ten weeks in which to make our selections because the final choices had to be in the cooperating classrooms by mid-March. School vacations further complicated the timetable.

The members of the group were rotated monthly to increase the number of children who could participate. The youngsters involved were chosen from among the stronger readers in the classroom where possible, but they were told that it was appropriate for a participant to have an adult read to them. The children were enthusiastic and cooperative, and they tried mightily to read as much as they could. The discussions we held each week were interesting and revealing. For the most part, children tended to serve as advocates for the specific books they read. A child reporting back on two or three books tended to want to recommend all of them. Especially in the beginning, they found it difficult to say when they did not like a book. The hardest thing for the children to understand was that just because a book had gotten published didn't necessarily mean that they had to like it, or even that it was good. Even those books that were good, and that they liked a lot, still might not be appropriate choices for the award.

It became necessary for me to force the children to choose only one book from those they enjoyed that week. To do this we first had to review the criteria that we have established at the onset and which the children were to have been thinking about as they read each book. As the children were quick to understand, many of the books were different from one another and therefore difficult to compare. We had to look at other qualities when trying to decide which of the candidates might be worthy of the award. It was only when they were helped to focus on some of these issues that the children were finally able to make a reluctant choice.

Despite the many problems that ultimately became clear as the process continued that first year, we reached a most satisfactory conclusion. When pressed, the children were, in fact, able to make excellent choices, and the final four candidates that were sent on to the cooperating classrooms were splendid. Many adults had expressed skepticism to me about the children's ability to successfully conclude the task, and I too had been worried. For me, the hardest part was the knowledge that having empowered the children to make the decision, I would have to accept whatever they decided. To have done otherwise would have betrayed both their trust and the validity of the award.

When the finalists had been selected and their part in the process was complete, I met with the children to review the process together and evaluate what had gone on. I was interested in finding out from them what worked and what they found difficult.

I already knew that the procedure was unwieldy from my point of view. Finding an appropriate time to meet with the representatives from each class was difficult. I had a full schedule of library classes to meet with each week and only certain periods free. Each classroom had its own schedule and it wasn't fair to ask children to relinquish some activities in favor of serving on the committee. There was never enough time for the group to meet and to fully consider the books in a relaxed fashion.

It emerged in the final discussion that the children were equally unhappy with the process. They complained that it was very difficult for them to find the time to read and consider the books. They also felt burdened by the necessity of making the kinds of decisions forced upon them in so short a period of time. While they were delighted to have been part of



the process, and in fact they were adamant that children continue to participate in the selection of the candidates, it was generally agreed that the process itself needed to be refined for the next year's award.

### **The Process Changes**

I gave a lot of thought over the summer to how the system might be revised. In the course of deciding how best to alter the procedure, I considered some of the comments made during the process by the children as well as statements made by the teachers. Often, in passing, one of the teachers would comment on the excitement in his or her room when the committee members returned from the meeting with new books. They would then go on to describe the pleasure they felt watching the children pore over these books together and comment to one another about them. Some of the casual comments they were overhearing were exactly the things I was hoping children were considering when evaluating the books. So at least I had been reassured that some of the process had been successful. With this as well as the children's comments in mind, I devised a new method of book selection that attempted to combine elements of several of the previous plans.

Although the best solution that I could come up with required a good deal of cooperation from the classroom teachers, I felt reasonably certain that this would not be a problem. The school places great value on children's opinions and encourages children to be critical readers. Our teachers are also quite interested in children's literature themselves and attempt to keep apprised of new children's books. In fact, teachers often bring me suggestions for new acquisitions for the library of noteworthy books that they found in some bookstore or library. I was fairly certain that they would be willing to go along with my new format.

The current and, I think, successful, format for the award now involves all of the eight-, nine- and ten-year-old children in the third-fourth and fourth-fifth grade classrooms. It also involves the support of the Publications group. The new director, Ellen Schecter, and others in the department are constantly on the lookout for possible candidates and send them to me to hold for later consideration. As books are submitted by the publishers or as I encounter them during the year, I also put them aside.

By the end of December I usually manage to trim the possibilities to approximately

one hundred and fifty books. I then invite a number of adults who are actively involved in children's literature at the college, instructors in graduate programs, teachers in the School for Children, and members of the Publications Group, to read as many of the books as possible and recommend those they think worthy of being considered by the children for the award. I then divide the top thirty-five to forty books into four sets. I try to see to it that these sets are well balanced, with equal numbers of folk tales and realistic stories.

Each group of books is then placed in one of the eights-nines and nine-tens classrooms for a week. During the course of the week the books are read and discussed by the children. Some of the books are first read aloud by the classroom teachers, others are left for the children to explore on their own. At the end of the week the children are asked to vote for their three favorite books. I tally the votes and then rotate the sets to the next classroom, where the process is repeated. At the end of a four-week period, a subset of the top ten to twelve books is culled. I then meet with each class for a culminating session. One by one each of the finalists is discussed. A fan of a particular book is asked to volunteer to describe the plot and then tell why he or she thinks the book deserves consideration for the award. If anyone holds an opposing viewpoint, they are welcome to give it at this time. The books are compared to one another and a final vote taken. The top three (or, in the case of a very close vote, four) books are then sent on to the cooperating classrooms for the final decision.

### **Some Issues That Are Raised**

Although each group of children is different and the conversations that we have vary from class to class as well as year to year, consistent themes emerge over the years. Some of these themes are predictable, but some are surprising. What for me was a fairly straightforward undertaking raised, for the children, surprising social issues I had never considered. And although I have attempted to incorporate some of these issues into my introductory presentation each year, children still pick up on and explore the concerns.

As the time for beginning the award process arrives, I hold preliminary conversations with the older children during our library period. Most of these children were in the sevens-eights classrooms and voted on the finalists in previous years. They are already familiar with

the idea of selecting an award-winning book and, in fact, are disappointed to think that they will not be making the final decision again this year. So, when I tell them that they will now be responsible for choosing the books that this year's sevens-eights will vote on, they are most pleased and relieved.

Among the first things the children want to know the first time they participate in the process is who Irma Simonton Black was and how she was related to Bank Street. I describe the history of the award to them and show them some of the books Mrs. Black had written and worked on. Many of the titles, particularly *The Little Old Man Who Could Not Read*, are familiar to them and are remembered fondly.

The children also want to know where the books that would be considered came from and what other adults would be involved in the process. Was this part of the book committee that I was a member of and from which I was always bringing them books to respond to and evaluation? Most important, the children want to know about the award itself. Is there a cash prize? When they are told that the winning author and illustrator are presented with a commemorative scroll at a luncheon celebration and that the publisher receives special award seals that may be affixed to copies of the winning book, but that there is no monetary award, some children question why the author would care about winning.

This leads to a discussion of the book publishing industry. The children talk about why publishers might be willing to submit a free copy of a book they would like to have considered. They imagine what winning an award might mean for sales of a book and by extension what increased sales might mean to the author and the publisher. The psychological impact of an award seal on a book to the potential buyer is also discussed. Some of our library copies of award-winning books do not have the seal on them because they became library books before they became award winners. The children are quick to notice this and comment on it. Other children, who have copies of the book in their home mention whether or not it has a seal. To my surprise, very few are unable to remember that detail.

Once this background discussion is completed, we review the criteria for the award. When the children were in the sevens-eights, the final three or four choices that they voted on had been preselected for them. They could assume that each of the books they were seeing

and hearing was a worthy candidate. Now it would be more difficult. While each of the books they would see would have been deemed appropriate for the award by the participating adults, there would be clear differences among them. This time the children would be trying to decide not which book *they* liked the best, but which book they felt seven- and eight-year-olds would like best, as well as which book was *worthy* of an award.

To give the children a frame of reference within which to consider the candidates, I read the list of previous award winners and show them the books. The children are familiar with most of the titles, and it is always a pleasure to hear someone exclaim, "Oh, I love that book!" as I hold it up. If we come upon a title most of the children find unfamiliar, I make note and read it aloud to them at our next meeting.

As we read and discuss the previous winners, we talk about what the qualities of the books were that made them worthy of the award. While it was true, as some youngsters pointed out, that we were unable to compare the winners with the other contenders for that year, we could at very least generate a list of factors to be considered. Is the story in any way different or unusual? Are the illustrations striking or distinctive in and of themselves? Do the illustrations support the text, enhancing the mood of the book and helping to tell the story? Does the story have something to say to children that they would be able to understand? Is the language used in the text familiar or comfortable for listeners? Would you want to give this book as a present to someone?

While all of these factors would be considered by the children, they clearly felt that a "yes" answer to each question was not essential. Some of them could quite eloquently argue for a book that did not meet all of the criteria and yet was more than worthy of the award. Some of the previous winners reinforced that point. *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg (Houghton Mifflin, 1984) had no "story" and yet the children found the illustrations so compelling and engaging to their imaginations that they felt the award was justified. *The Stories Julian Tells* by Ann Cameron, illustrated by Ann Strugnell (Macmillan, 1981) has very few illustrations and is more a chapter book than a traditional picture book. Yet the family life depicted in that book spoke volumes to children, who argued that it does exemplify excellence in text and illustration.

Using *The Stories Julian Tells* as an

example, two ten-year-old boys raised the first objection. They insisted that seven was already too old for picture books. By seven, they felt, children were reading chapter books and would not care for any of the picture book candidates. Other children in the group disagreed. They still enjoyed picture books themselves at ten, and so they were sure that the seven- and eight-year-olds would too. Some of the children had younger siblings the right age who, they maintained, still read and enjoyed picture books. Other children had younger siblings who didn't. Some children correctly pointed out that often the language and vocabulary in picture books was more difficult than that in many beginning chapter books, so most seven year olds probably couldn't even read many of these picture books themselves.

After much conversation about this issue, it became clear that we had a dilemma. What could we do? The children who had raised the original objection came up with the perfect solution. A delegation would go to the sevens-eights classrooms and interview the children! They would ask them about the kinds of books they liked to read and whether or not they were still interested in picture books. And that is precisely what they did. Fortunately, the sevens-eights agreed that they quite enjoyed reading and hearing picture books. In fact, I suspect that some of the older children might have been responding to their own memories of when they first conquered chapter books. Clearly their empathy with beginning readers was strong. To be perceived as still liking picture books at seven or eight, much less at ten, held negative connotations for them which might have been a prime factor in their raising of this concern.

The next issue raised was the fact that different people like different things. How, wondered the children, could they decide which of the books was the "best?" We talked about the meaning of the word *subjective*, and I explained that most decisions about award books, even those made by adults, were ultimately subjective. I pointed out that we could, and had, set objective criteria for the award, but that conclusions about whether or not a certain book met those criteria, by their very nature, had to be subjective. That, I explained, was why we would vote on the books and why a majority of the votes would determine the *winners* at the various stages of the procedure.

This led to still a new concern being raised--the issue of fairness in the voting. Might

not some children vote for a book simply because their friend wanted them to? For children this age the issue of peer pressure is a very real concern. They might know all the right things to say about not succumbing, but often that is more easily said than done.

There were no easy answers. We tried to air the issue fully. The children talked about what was fair to the authors of the books and what was fair to the process, and ultimately what was fair to one another. By raising and dealing with these concerns, we could hope that children would vote their own minds, but there was no way we could assure it. A secret ballot would help to insure fairness in voting and the children discussed strategies for dealing with friends' questions about which books they had voted for and why. We also talked about why it might seem important to some children that a book they liked would win, and how children might feel if a favorite of theirs did not even make it to the finals. Clearly, children invest a lot of themselves in the process of reading and evaluating books. And every contest carries with it the elements of winning and losing, no matter how you try to frame the discussion.

Another thing that we discussed in those preliminary sessions was how the children might deal with the large number of books to be read in addition to all the other things that were going on in the classroom. Since this had been a problem for the group that first year, I was prepared for this very realistic concern. We talked about strategies the children might employ from week to week. The only limitation was that the books could not leave the classroom. It would be too disruptive if a child were to take a book home and then forget it the next day, or lose it. The children themselves had no real problem with that rule. While they might have preferred the extra time that taking a book home would offer, there were only eight or nine books in each set and twenty eight children. The mathematics of that, and the logistics necessary to ensure fairness, did not escape them.

The question of strategies for dealing with all the books that must be read in only a week was first raised by a child in the eights-nines. Although I assumed it was an issue for the younger children only, it quickly became clear when I brought the question to the nines-tens that although they might not have spontaneously raised it as a question themselves, it was indeed a matter of great concern. In one of the eights-nines groups, it was suggested that



the pictures in the book could be looked at first. If they were not immediately appealing to the reader, the book could be put aside for later consideration. Another child in the class protested that we had already said that how one liked illustrations was an individual decision and that sometimes even if we didn't think something was beautiful, it was still so perfect for the story that it ought to be considered. "I didn't say eliminate it," the first child retorted. "I said put it aside for later, if you have time to get to it." It was agreed by the group that it was one possibility. Since you might not have time to fully read everything, it was fair to delay reading books you "felt" you might not vote for.

Another strategy suggested was that of asking the teacher to read aloud books that looked most appealing at first glance by a number of children. In that way, the whole group would hear at least some of the prime candidate. That would leave fewer of them to be read independently.

In the nines-tens group, the suggestion was made to read the summary or blurb on the book jacket first in order to eliminate a full reading of a story that was of no interest. This led to a discussion of the purpose of a book's blurb, something that had been talked about with all the children as part of my regular library instruction program. We have examined the parts of a book, of which the blurb is a very important component, in library class. When children are trying to make a pleasure reading choice and ask me for some suggestions, I usually hand them a number of items that fit the parameters of what they have asked for and tell them to "read the blurbs." We have also talked about the job of the blurb, which the children are aware is to "sell" the book to a purchaser or a reader. This, the children agreed, made reading the blurb a very appropriate strategy, for if the part of the book that is expressly designed to make you want to buy it does not make the book sound appealing to a reader, it is unlikely that the book will win one of the reader's three votes for the week.

Skimming the pages was another of the suggestions offered by the children. It would be possible to glance through the pages, read a little of the beginning to see if you were "grabbed," then read some of some of the middle parts to further judge the language, and if you liked what you read, you could go back and read the whole thing more carefully. If not, you could just skip to the end to find out what happens.

The children decided that you could also listen to some of your friends' conversations about some of the books. If someone really liked a book, it would be fair for them to recommend that other children try to read it before other books. This would not be the same as trying to influence a vote, the children argued. Rather, it was a way of insuring that enough attention was paid to a particularly enjoyable item. It did not mean that you had to vote for it, just that it was a good idea to try to read it fully.

One of the remarkable things about the whole process is how similarly children think about things, whether they are in the eights-nines or nines-tens. Although the exact words might not be the same from group to group, the broad concepts or strategies proposed were much the same. Only rarely has it been necessary for me to introduce an idea to one of the groups that has been raised by another. I have found that if I am willing to wait and let the conversations proceed on their own, whatever the point is that I hope they will consider, they will bring it up themselves. There have been very few exceptions to this.

One of the things that I enjoy most about the whole process is hearing the children's comments when they come in to the library once they have begun the process of reading and choosing the books. They very much want to talk to me about what they have liked and not liked that week. Sometimes it is clear that they would like to hear some validation of their opinions. As the weeks wear on, the children are curious about the number of votes a certain book might be getting in other classrooms. Since I do not tell the children how the vote is going, other than in the most general of terms, they want to know if other groups have responded as they did. When I am specifically asked about the vote, I try to make a general comment like "It's doing fairly well," or "I'm not sure if it will make it into the top twelve." While I would like to play down the contest aspect of the process, I also do want to give the children a sense of how things are going.

Once the sets of books to be considered go into the classrooms, a lot depends on the involvement of the classroom teacher. How a teacher shares a book with his or her students can affect how the students themselves feel about the book. If the teacher does not provide time for the children to work with the books and a separate space to house them, the children quickly forget about them as the crush of the

week's schedule overwhelms them.

The first week of the first year I tried this method, I walked into the classroom with ballots on Friday morning only to be greeted by panicked looks in the eyes of some of the children who had not found time to look at more than half of the books. Would they be allowed to vote anyway, they wondered. I decided to leave the ballots and the books with them for the rest of the day and not pick them up until after morning meeting on Monday. This would give the children at least a little time more to ready and review the set. I also said that yes, they could vote even if they had not read all of the books. I reasoned that the choices they were making about which books to look at first were in themselves significant. I also reminded them about the strategies we had discussed for skimming through a book when time was short.

In one case, a teacher remarked to me how fond he was of a particular book. He loved the message it was sending to kids, the simplicity and yet rich complexity of the story, and the wonderful illustrations. It was not surprising to me when at the end of that week, that the book received a very large number of votes from the children in his group. But as the set of books traveled on to the other rooms, the teachers there apparently did not feel quite the same way about the book, or at least did not communicate their enthusiasm to their class. Very few other children gave it their vote. The book did not make it to the final twelve, much less the final four, that year.

There are also some clear differences among the age groups. The books that ultimately make it to the final discussion of twelve were uniformly like by all ages. Nevertheless, many titles appeal more to older children than to younger ones, and vice versa. This appears to be more an issue of theme than one of format. It is not how many words the author uses to tell the story, but rather the story that is being told. *Charlie Anderson*, written by Barbara Abercrombie and illustrated by Mark Graham, would appear on the surface to be much too young for eight-, nine- and ten-year old readers. There are very few lines of text on each page. Yet the message of the story being told clearly touched a chord in readers of all ages. Charlie Anderson, the cat of the title, has two homes, much like the children in the story, whose parents are divorced. The reassurance children found in this story made it the winner in 1991.

As I have said earlier, I try very hard to

balance the sets of books that go into the classrooms. If possible, each set contains an equal number of fairy tales, folk tales and realistic stories. All children, it appears, enjoy a good, well-constructed story regardless of the genre. Illustration is another matter entirely. It is almost impossible to make generalizations about the kinds of pictures to which kids will respond. The only exception to that statement is that subtlety, as expressed by fuzzy, non-distinct images, is not highly regarded by the eight to ten set. Bold is better, whether represented by color or by detail. Even black and white line drawings are admired if they are expressive.

Humor is a characteristic that appears to be universally enjoyed. But the humor has to be inherent in the character or the situation. Kids have very little patience for a story that is just plain silly. Frequently, something that adults are highly amused by are little more than groaners to many kids. That having been said, there have nevertheless been a number of recent books that children seemed to greatly enjoy and laugh over together, pointing out particular funny passages or pictures, but which received very few votes when the final decision was made. I am not certain whether this is because the children somehow feel that the award is serious business, and something too funny or silly just is not a suitable choice. If that is how they feel, the message was not conveyed by me, nor do I believe it came from the teachers. It might have been an instinctive decision on their part.

### The Final Conversations

At the end of the four week period, the time comes for me to count all of the votes and identify the ten to twelve top choices. The number of semifinalist may vary, depending on the balance of votes. I then meet with each group individually, either in the classroom or in the library, for a minimum of one hour. In this session, the children are asked to review for one another the plot and positive characteristics of each book, stressing why they believe it made it this far, and why they feel it deserves to be one of the finalist. There are always some surprises at this point. Some of the titles in the batch turn up because they received a large number of votes from one or two of the other groups. In many cases, this causes the children to look at the titles in a different way. Also, the balance of the final set is quite different. Many of the strongest choices are now together, confronting one another as it were. There might be a sur-

feit of fairy tales, as there often is, and only a few of the more realistic stories. The children are forced to regard the books in a different light. What might have seemed special before, in a different context, now seems far more ordinary. Different kinds of comparisons must be made.

At the beginning of each discussion session I ask the children to review the criteria that they applied when considering each set of books. What are the things they were thinking about when they were reading and voting on the books? What are the things they are looking for in a good book? Predictably, the first things the children talk about are the qualities for which the award is given. They will invariably say that they considered whether the illustrations and text of each book were "excellent" and whether they went together well. It is an automatic, almost rote, response.

One of the most surprising aspects of these final conversations, however, is that while there might be clear differences of opinion over particular books, children, regardless of their ages, appear to want the same general attributes in a book, and they have no difficulty articulating what they are. Children like a good, exciting story; they prefer that it have some humor in it; and they insist that it be believable. Across the board, in all of the discussions, these attributes emerge.

When children insist that a story be believable, they do not mean that they do not like fantasy. In fact, the opposite is true. A disproportionate number of the final choices, and previous years' winners, have been fantasies. What children expect is that the plot be possible, if not probable. If there were really magic in the world, could the events in the story take place? That a particular situation may be unlikely is of little consequence. More important is that the logic be acceptable and the events exciting.

Humor, while important, cannot exceed the bounds of logic either. Children like the story to be funny, but it cannot be ridiculous. The humor has to stem from the characters or the situations, but the rule of logic must apply here too. It cannot be out of character or alien to the situation.

One of the rules of the final discussion session is that it is never sufficient for the children to say that they liked a book, that it was nice, funny, pretty, or any of the usual bland trivialities. The child describing or advocating for a book needs to find a way of expressing what

was different, special, distinctive, important, or unusual about the book. They must compare it positively to other titles, either the titles in the set or to previous award winners, or other favorite books.

This is a very difficult thing for anybody to do, adult or child. Very often we respond to something on a level which is very hard to put into words. Children, particularly younger children, find it extremely challenging to articulate exactly what it is they like or dislike about a particular item. They often respond to this challenge by employing a technique in which they have been well trained by their response group literature experiences. They find a particular passage or illustration and share it with the group as a way of concretely expressing why they enjoy the book.

The dynamics of the discussion are also interesting and sometimes surprising. Certain books have an intense effect on some children. More than once over the years I have held up a particular book and heard someone say "Oh, I loved that book." Conversely, the presentation of a book has also been greeted by groans of "How did that get in the final bunch?" Spontaneous negative comments of this nature can be very intimidating to those who liked the book, especially if they are met with any kind of agreement by other children in the group. That enough other children felt as they did, or the book would not have made it to the final twelve, often is lost sight of in the heat of the moment. When this happens, I first remind them of the fact and then I will ask someone who might have voted for the book to tell why they did so. Very often, the child who volunteers for the assignment is a very eloquent spokesperson for the book in question. More than once, the volunteer has been a surprise to me and to the classroom teacher. A child who may be a poor or reluctant reader, who might have other learning or attention issues, will have been strongly affected by a particular book. Maybe he or she relates to the message of the story in a very personal way, or it might just be that this book was one which the child was able to come to successfully--that the child was able to read and understand this title like few others. Whatever the case, the advocate is usually able to make a case for the book in a thoughtful and eloquent manner. More than once over the years, a book that was greeted with loud groans on its presentation to the group received among the largest number of votes at the end of that group's session and ended up among the final four.



The effect of the final conversation on the vote varies with the sets of books under discussion in a particular year as well as with the group. Often books that have been spoken about with great enthusiasm by a large number of children in the group ultimately do not garner the most votes. Yet the conversation itself seems to change very few minds. Children are able to advocate for a particular book, recognizing its merits, without choosing it over the others. In these instances it would appear that the first impression is the most lasting. Sometimes the points raised in the discussion are so compelling that opinions are altered. Other times, the entire group can agree on a point, seemingly a negative point, about a book, and yet that book remains the winner.

For example, when the book under discussion was *The Enchanted Wood*, the children pointed out the generic qualities of the fairy tale: three brothers, failure of the first two at the task at hand, an enchantment, magic intercession, and so on. The familiarity and predictability of the tale was commented on, agreed to by the whole group, in all four sessions, and yet it emerged the clear favorite in all of the voting. Perhaps the beauty of the illustrations outweighed the familiarity of the story in the minds of children, or perhaps the familiarity of the story was the very quality that appealed to them. Whichever the case, there was no doubt about the final vote. *The Enchanted Wood* was the clear favorite in all of the groups.

Sometimes a books will have a very clear appeal for one age group, but not for another. A case in point in the lovely, nostalgic tale, *Roxaboxen*, written by Alice McLerran and illustrated by Barbara Cooney. Teachers particularly loved this gentle story of children immersed in imaginative play while creating their special work (a town they called Roxaboxen) complete with such essentials as jail and cemetery. Older children, too, found the story appealing. During discussions, there were many comments such as "Oh, I used to do that, too," which suggested nostalgia was at play for them as well. Very young children (four-, five- and six-year olds) who were read the story also enjoyed and related to it as a reflection of their present lives. However the seven- and eight-year-olds were not as enchanted. For these children, just beginning their climb out of childhood, there seemed to be a reluctance to acknowledge behavior they perceived as childish. Nor were they old enough to be nostalgic about

an earlier period in their lives.

### The Award Winner Is Selected

After the votes are counted, copies of the four top vote-getters are sent to several cooperating schools in the northeast as well as to the two sevens-eights classrooms at Bank Street. Teachers are asked to share the books with their children several times over the next three weeks by reading them aloud and then making them available to the children for further examination on their own. At the end of that period, the books are reviewed and the children are asked to comment on the relative merits of each book. Then they vote. All of the votes from all of the participating classrooms are counted, and the winner is announced.

Conversations with the teachers and librarians who have participated in the final selection this year have revealed some interesting aspects of the classroom dynamic. One teacher reported that in his classroom a few very powerful children dominated the final discussion. They were extremely forceful in their advocacy for a certain book and the teacher became concerned that their preferences might overwhelm the rest of the class. He decided to ask the children to vote for a first and second choice among the four finalists instead of voting for just one book so that those who might have felt pressured could vote for their true favorite as the first (or second) choice and perhaps a clear second choice would emerge. It didn't. The clear winner in that classroom remained *The Bracelet* by Yoshiko Uchida, the book which had been the favorite of the powerful students. This book had become a finalist because of the strong advocacy for it by the children in one of the older groups who work on stage one of the process. In this classroom the teacher had, coincidentally, devoted a great deal of time during the year to Asian American culture. The children in this group, while worried that younger students might not understand all of the book, felt it nevertheless deserved to be a finalist. They believed that most teachers would be able to explain to their students anything that they might not understand.

In yet another classroom that voted on the finalist, issues of sexism dominated the discussions about the books. In this room the teacher devotes a good deal of time and energy seeing to it that her students are sensitive to concerns about fairness, racism and sexism. Trained, therefore, to be aware of these things,

it was not surprising that it would influence the decision. The children in this room preferred *Children of Lir* by Shelia MacGill-Callahan because they felt, strongly that boys and girls were portrayed as equally powerful in the story. The book that won the Irma S. and James H. Black Award this year, *Three Sacks of Truth* by Eric A. Kimmel, was scorned by this group because of what they saw as a stereotypical sexist interpretation of the queen and princess. Most of the other voters were inclined to focus on the humor in both the story and the illustrations by Robert Rayevsky.

Children who participate in the selection of the Irma S. and James H. Black Award seem to have a real investment in the outcome. When the older children, those who participated in their selection, are told the titles of the final four to be voted on by the younger participants, the information is greeted with responses ranging from smiles of satisfaction to groans of disappointment. Then they ask almost daily whether the final winner has been selected yet. When the final winner is finally announced, it is generally greeted with smiles and nods of agreement and satisfaction, regardless of how they might have originally voted. It seems they believe that they "own" all of the finalists, having sent them on for consideration by others, and they take great pride in the process. Years later, when these children notice a previous winner, or even an contender, on a library table, they will comment to one another about it, remembering together an activity that obviously made a strong impression.

### Do It Yourself

Although the process of selecting an award-winning book is clearly enhanced by the fact that there is a public culminating event supported by Bank Street College, it is possible to do many of the same things, and have many of the same kinds of conversations, on a smaller scale. Any school or classroom could select a "picture book of the year" or "best book" of any kind. The entries might be chosen from the new acquisitions for the year or from the entire collection. A particular genre might be selected, humor or fantasy for example, and the "best" or "favorite" title within that parameter named. When we prepare our summer reading suggestions together at the end of the year, the children and I have fascinating and intense discussions about the placement of certain books within the appropriate genre. Does Roald Dahl belong under humor or fantasy? Is

*A Wrinkle in Time* fantasy or science fiction? What is the difference between an adventure and a mystery? Such concerns can help children to focus on the attributes of the various genres in literature, giving them an excellent grounding for the future.

Children could be asked to participate in setting the criteria for an in-house award, to help determine the procedures involved in selecting a winner, even to determine how to celebrate the choice. If the library's new materials budget is small, this might become a fundraising activity in which parents might be encouraged to donate "contestant." Middle school children might select several "best books" that they would then bring into classrooms of younger children to share with them and solicit their opinions. The issues are the same, regardless of the scale of the undertaking. And the things that are learned, by both adults and children, are remarkable.

# Libraries Alive

## Promoting Libraries and Literature - Practical Applications for the Teacher-Librarian.

by Suzette Boyd  
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Methodist Ladies' College  
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*Methodist Ladies' College is a boarding and day school of over 2400 students from kindergarten to Year 13. There is a staff of three hundred including one hundred eighty teachers.*

For the purposes of this paper, I have assumed that as librarians and teachers we all love reading and that we want to involve our students in the enriching, challenging and thought-provoking world of books. An important factor in achieving our aims is that we have a captive audience of staff and students. Negative factors may be staffing and budgetary constraints. The latter is often perceived as a hurdle to program initiatives.

During this paper I hope to demonstrate that enthusiasm for and a commitment to literature are the essential tools needed to successfully promote our **product**. It doesn't matter how "well read" and knowledgeable we are about the world of books, without loads of enthusiasm and commitment it can be a difficult task to harness interest and excitement in students and sell reading to them. Reading, not just as a classroom activity, **but** as an interest and pleasure that will last a lifetime. The aim of this seminar is to inspire participants to inject renewed enthusiasm into the promotion of literature in their colleges and libraries.

I will focus on the promotion of literature inside the classroom, inside the library and in the wider community. My aim has always been to work towards the recognition of my college as a literary school. All of the initiatives outlined today will contribute to that aim becoming a reality.

### Student Literature Clubs

One of the most successful vehicles for promoting libraries and literature is the formation of co-curricula Student Literature Clubs. It is important to establish aims and rationale early in the establishment process, so that impetus and early excitement is not lost. I have established literature clubs in my last

three colleges and have been responsible for the establishment of similar clubs throughout my home state of Victoria and Australia.

### Aims

- \* To enable staff and students to share in the discovery of new books.
- \* To encourage students to be interested in books and reading for pleasure, not just something they have to do for school.
- \* To provide an opportunity for student initiatives e.g. arranging for guest speakers, participating in book buying, speaking at school assemblies, developing goals.
- \* To enable students aged from 12-18 to meet in a non-threatening, stimulating environment by coming together because of their love of reading.

Once the aims are established, an advertising blitz has been undertaken and there is a core of interested members, we come together to decide on the logistics of meetings and the type of activities to be offered. It has been crucial to the success of these clubs to have clearly established goals and agendas. Lunch-time meetings, for instance, can be over without any sense of achievement or fulfillment.

### Activities

Some of the wonderful activities possible are "Book of the Year" committees, literature camps, author visits, performance of picture books in local primary schools, Book Week dinners, excursions to plays, collaborating with an illustrator to create a mural for the library, buying original art work from children's books and writing articles and reviews for local papers. This list is not an exhaustive list; the possibilities are limited only by one's imagination.

### The importance of publicity.

If the types of activities listed above are promoted not only within your college community but also in the wider education and local community, all sorts of opportunities may come your way. I have had requests from publishers wanting feed-back from young readers about a manuscript they're considering and from a company producing a video on author Robin Klein wanting student input. If your college is known as a literary institution and your students are known as readers and you are known as an energetic, enthusiastic teacher-librarian all these adventures can and do happen for you, your students, your library and your college.

The literature Club will become an integral part of the library's operation will be an effective vehicle through which to promote literature and reading to the rest of the college and the wider community. With keen readers being given the opportunity for positive input and contact with the library, an increase in discriminating borrowing and discussion of books will occur.

### **Staff Book Club**

The library aims to promote literature and reading to all its users--staff and students. Establishing a Staff Book Club is a positive and effective way to give teachers the opportunity to learn more about publishing for young people. So often teachers only read what is on the curriculum or the books they are teaching this year, which might well be the same titles they taught the year before and the year before that as well. Coming together to explore and discuss new adolescent titles and authors in a social situation and over a meal is a great way to forge strong links with classroom teachers. Not only English teachers, but **all** teachers should be targeted as possible members of a staff book group. It is in the interest of all of us to know what our students and children are reading. The clubs I've established have had a strong social focus. We have had evenings when we have met in a member's home, over a meal which we have all helped to prepare.

### **Organization of the club**

- \* A wide selection of new books must be available for members to borrow.
- \* A reminder of the forthcoming meeting, with address, location map and time is given to each member one week before the next meeting.

- \* Each member brings their culinary contribution, the book they have read and their review (on a system card) to the meeting.

- \* During the course of the evening (usually 7:00p.m. - 10:00p.m.), each member reviews the book(s) they have read and makes recommendations, for example, as to a book's suitability for class study or class set purchase.

The decision to include written reviews may be regarded negatively in these times of heavy teacher workloads. However, these re-views have been one of the most successful aspects of the organization, resulting in the annual publication of the pamphlet, "Best Books for Young People," thousands of which have been sold throughout Australia.

The establishment of Staff Book Clubs is an acknowledgment of "teachers as learners". The Teacher-Librarian is not only the facilitator, but an initiator with skills and expertise, enabling all staff to be learning for the future and to participate together in the promotion of literature.

### **Feedback from teachers**

Some of the many comments I have received over the years include:

" Reviews of books often lead on to the discussion of other issues...and concerns about individual students."

" ....as we have different reading tastes we are becoming familiar with a wide range of books".

" .....social get-together of staff who don't usually mix at school".

" I have found a range of books suitable for reluctant readers in my class".

" I now have more confidence in recommending a variety of books to classes."

" It's exciting to be offered twenty or so new titles every month".

### **Literature for Life**

I am convinced that there is a need and a demand for students to be offered specialized literature studies as part of the education curriculum. Studies that teach them about the world of literature and books and develop them as readers, rather than studies that focus on a set text and reader response. I will outline an elective course that I have taught to both Year 9 and Year 10 students (ages 14 -16). The course runs for a full year.



### **Aims**

- \* To foster reading for pleasure as an interest that can be carried on beyond college.
- \* To develop in students the skills when reading, to form values and ideas.
- \* To expose students to a wide range of literature.

I encourage students to read aloud in class so that they can fully appreciate the power of the written word and become confident in their use and appreciation of language. I encourage them to read beyond their present level and to learn to discriminate between "pulp" and quality literature. We work together on improving their listening and oral skills. Students are introduced to the works of a wide range of authors and illustrators.

### **Focus**

Student and teacher participation and involvement are closely aligned throughout the course. We come together to share our interest in literature. The teacher should be a guide and facilitator reflecting a wider experience of the world of literature than the students. The students must be open to questions, suggestions and new directions. They don't know what to expect from the course. Their lack of preconceptions is probably one of the advantages of offering such a course of study. All minds are open to new experiences and can grow together. However, some guidance must be presented to the students as to possible areas of exploration.

### **Topics**

1. Sharing the experience of reading
2. The skill of reading aloud and its effect on the listeners.
3. What is a "good" book?
4. The development of the technique of selecting a "good" book.
5. Looking at literature from childhood.
6. Analyzing and appreciating the experiences we all bring to reading.
7. The significance of reading for enjoyment.
8. Publishing - who decides what we'll read?
9. Marketing techniques and strategies of publishers.

One of the privileges for me as a teacher-librarian has been the chance to teach literature studies to students in the crucial middle years of schooling. I have become familiar with new stories and new authors from

our discussions and have made friendships with students that are often not possible in more mainstream studies. Seeing these young people develop a commitment to reading and grow in their love and knowledge of literature has been enlightening for me as an "old hand" at bringing books and young people together.

### **"Reading for Pleasure" Classes**

I conduct these classes as part of the English curriculum, but very much as a teacher-librarian and a literature specialist. They are effective at reaching large numbers of students across the college. Sessions take place in the reading area of the library, and are offered to all English classes from Years 7 - 11.

### **Format**

In these classes I present 10-15 new high interest titles (not always fiction) and introduce the characters, discuss the plot and how I reacted to the book personally and what other student's reactions have been (always favorable of course). Lots of enthusiasm is demonstrated and I never introduce books that I have not personally read. It is not my aim to discuss in detail the literary merits of each book, but rather to encourage the students to read them. I also allow 10-15 minutes at the end of a 50 minute period in which to read a short story, a picture book, or I may read a chapter from one of the books I introduced. This segment seems to be a favorite with both the teachers and the students. I always make sure that I have multiple copies of the titles being introduced, as there is usually an immediate rush on them. If some students have to reserve a title or wait too long they won't return...this is the big opportunity to promote reading, so multiple copies are a must.

### **Benefits**

The students have a contact in the library in whom they have confidence as a readers' adviser.

The students are much more involved and interested in the fiction collection and new titles.

The students will come and seek information and advice regularly and are more likely to suggest titles that I should read.

Enjoyment from hearing a teacher give book reports.

The teachers are delighted to offer their students the variety of a specialist teacher.

These benefits take time to achieve, but

commitment and enthusiasm will eventually be rewarded with success and respect.

### **Literature as Part of the English Curriculum**

As cooperative planning and teaching is an integral part of the education services of most libraries now, there are opportunities aplenty as a teacher-librarian to become involved in the English curriculum. Specialist enrichment units I have been involved in team-teaching have included:

- \* Book of the Year - areas focussed on include the short-listed titles for that year, inviting a judge from our state to talk to our students, and looking at past winners of awards.
- \* Illustration - areas focussed on include, looking at the development of picture books through the years, a visit to an Illustrators' gallery, and workshops with illustrators.
- \* Publishing - after visiting Penguin Books and hearing many speakers there, students published their own books.
- \* Folk Tales - areas focussed on included re-writing traditional folk tales, dramatizing and reading aloud.
- \* Author Study - visiting authors who spoke to my students were interviewed, were researched and then profiled for publication in school papers and magazines.

### **At Methodist Ladies' College**

So far I have concentrated on fairly structured programs that promote the library through literature. Most of the above programs involve the teacher-librarians.

At Methodist Ladies' College in Melbourne, Australia, where I am the Director of Library services I have established a management structure that ensures all staff in the library are involved in promoting their own area of responsibility. We are divided into five teams and a management team. All five groups have a team leader who is also a member of the management team. The teams are Reader Services, Education Services, Collection Management, Technology/Media Services and Marketing. There would not be one member of the staff of ten who is not at some time bringing literature and students together.

### **Activities For Students**

- \* Reading Lists - updated and on display, given to class teachers.
- \* Student Networkers - a group of students who work in the library on displays, and lunchtime promotions.
- \* Displays - author profiles, Literature and Poetry Club information, Best Books, reviews, Best-seller Lists, themes and news items.
- \* Suggestion Book - very popular with the students. (Suggestions must be acted on promptly)

### **Activities for the School Community**

- \* A Library Expo - displays, speakers, performers.
- \* MLC READS! - to celebrate the Library Expo and the importance of reading the whole school of 2500 came together for 50 minutes for a period of private reading. To signal the end of the reading period a Tiger Moth aeroplane circled the school towing a banner which said MLC READS! All fully sponsored by one of our suppliers.

### **Activities for Parents**

- \* Friends of the Library - an interest and support group that assists with end-processing of books, organizes information evenings and talks for parents.
- \* Literary Evenings - special evenings once a term promoting recent literature.
- \* Weekly column in the Principal's Newsletter - news and reviews, services and future directions.

### **Activities for the Wider Community**

- \* Links with publishers - bringing students and literature together at the beginning of the process.
- \* Visitors Days (once a term) - where other educators visit our library to discuss our innovative programs.

I cannot stress enough the importance of marketing. It's no use having a good knowledge of children's literature if you don't share it, nor is the library going to be "alive" if you don't market it and encourage others to take advantage of all it has to offer. If you're doing something new or exciting tell the staff at general staff meetings and tell the whole school at assemblies. Write reports for the school

newsletters, contact the print and electronic media, send information out on Bulletin Boards, use E-Mail and write articles for your professional journals. We all benefit by hearing of exciting or effective ways of marketing and promoting our product.

If the school library program is seen as being innovative, effective, risk-taking, entrepreneurial and responsive to user needs, funding and staffing cease to become hurdles.

# **A Transformation in Teacher Education: or How Can Disadvantaged Teachers Become Information Literate?**

by  
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## **Introduction**

As a result of a literature survey and two empirical surveys, it has been found that subject teachers in secondary schools and lecturers in tertiary institutions should be role models for their pupils and students with regard to reading and information literacy development (Olén:1993). In a developing country such as South Africa many teachers enter initial teacher education with little or no experience of libraries and information sources. These students need to become information literate during their initial teacher education, otherwise they will not have the knowledge of information sources and skills which they will need, if they are going to be role models for their pupils and help them to become information literate.

## **Initial teacher education**

According to the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) (1992:58) report on teacher education, in certain African countries, such as Mozambique, there is no, or hardly any, correspondence between what teachers learn during their initial education and what they are supposed to teach. Also very few of the new methodologies are implemented in practice, because teachers continue to dominate classroom instruction, while their pupils' activities are mostly limited to reception and reproduction. Assessment focuses narrowly on results and little attention is paid to the process of learning. As this is unsatisfactory the NEPI report suggests the need for policy instruments to support the implementation of change in practice.

Sieböcker and Kenyon (1992:153) believe that if schools are going to provide pupils with more relevant education, which will better equip them with the attitudes and understanding of people and the world, the task of initial teacher education is vital. It should ensure "the transformation of the unhelpful experiences and models which student teachers bring with them from their own

schooldays into more helpful ones".

Many students entering initial teacher education have never had access to school libraries. During the empirical surveys it was found that even students who had had access to school libraries made little voluntary use of either the school library or the college-university library. Their perception of the school library is chiefly instrumental - a place to get teaching aids to make lessons more interesting. Another problem is that the provision of facilities, equipment and staff in the colleges of education for African students is often very poor and so many African students leave college with a very limited knowledge of information sources and children's literature, and without having produced any materials for classroom use. Their lecturers probably do not themselves know how to produce teaching materials while there is usually also limited equipment available.

The NEPI report on teacher education suggests that teachers need to become competent, but also confident, resilient, self-reflective, and develop "a range of pedagogical and classroom management skills, and an appreciation of the central role of enquiry in both teaching and learning". Surely this means that teachers also need to be made aware of the role of the school library and become information literate during the period of initial teacher education?

An increasing number of reports and articles published in the U.K. and U.S.A stress that lecturers in colleges of education and in faculties of education at universities must promote reading and information literacy in the teaching and learning process. Information literacy is regarded as a critical literacy for an educated person who will be living and working in the 21st century. The literature also suggests that the students' information literacy should be assessed at the end of their teacher education as part of their accreditation.

How can this be achieved? Although some

authors, notably Hall (1986), Hallein (1988), Irving (1980) and Unesco (*South Pacific Region Pilot Project ...* 1983), have suggested that all teachers should have to take a specialized course in Information studies/skills. I personally do not believe this is the solution as students would probably resent having to take such a course. If we want to make every teacher aware of the important role of the school library then education and the school library must become relevant to each other. It is for this reason that authors, such as Bodi (1990), Miner (1989), Naito (1991), Tierney (1992), Werrell and Wesley (1990) and Wilke (1991), believe that for information literacy programs at the tertiary level to be effective they must, just as in primary and secondary school, be integrated into courses and relevant to students' needs. Information literacy programs are intensely dependent on faculty. So lecturers need to make the use of the library an inherent part of their teaching and include it as a component from the first year through to the final year when students can be surveyed to assess the extent to which they are information literate.

An increasing number of sources suggest methods for librarians to collaborate with lecturers in developing integrated courses. Although such integrated courses to develop information literacy have to be designed with the specific needs of the students and course objectives in mind, assignments, and in particular projects could be an ideal means for such collaboration.

### Theory on projects

The theory on projects is vast and I intend to highlight only a few of those aspects which I consider to be particularly relevant to the situation in a developing country.

Malley (1984:43) points out that one of the most enduring tasks which school pupils have is the completion of assignments. The assignment technique is valid in all the school and tertiary education phases. "Assignment" has a broad meaning and can include any tasks which the teacher gives a pupil to do, for example, consulting a dictionary to find the meaning of a word or reading a paragraph in order to extract the key sentence (*Information Skills in the Secondary Curriculum* 1981:13). Jay (1983:15) suggests teachers can begin with smaller assignments leading into and providing experience for larger

assignments.

In Marland's (1992:23) view there is a temptation for some teachers to set too large an assignment too early. He suggests that pupils might be given an assignment requiring them to locate five sources and not have to do anything with them, or they may be given five sources and asked to write a short report synthesizing certain information contained in them. According to Waterhouse (1988:74) there is nothing wrong with starting in a fairly prescriptive way. As pupils learn to work independently they can be given greater freedom to select topics which are of particular interest to them and also greater choice with regard to forms of presentation. Marland (1987:13) has also suggested that assignments can be broken down into stages. Jay (1986:32) points out that a number of short projects may result in greater learning than one lengthy project.

However assignments should sometimes include project work which has been defined as "an activity in which the learner acquires and applies knowledge and skills through practical involvement in an actual or simulated real-life problem or task" (Irving & Snape 1979:101). A project may be cross-curricular and pupils are given more time for its completion, because they are expected to consult a number of sources.

### Problems with projects

Projects have often been severely criticized, because too often pupils copy information verbatim from textbooks or reference works (Edwards 1976:3; Great Britain 1975:94; Wray 1985:3). Other problem areas are that pupils may not know:

- \* what information to look for
- \* where to find the information or books that they could cope with
- \* how much information is required
- \* how to organize the information collected
- \* what illustrations are required
- \* where to find illustrations
- \* how to present their findings
- \* how to make posters
- \* how to make models
- \* how to set out or layout their presentation
- \* why they are doing the project

It is thus obvious that at the outset teachers must give pupils very clear and sequenced written instructions.

Teachers may also have problems with



projects as they may think of them as additional work. Many do not know

- \* what they are expected to achieve by setting projects for their pupils
- \* what skills they are supposed to be developing
- \* how to go about preparing a project
- \* how to evaluate a project

This means that teachers need a better understanding of the different types of project which can be set, the information skills required for the effective completion of each (Irving 1980:17).

Other problems may be the availability of resources. Books containing information relevant to the topic, as well as the reading ability of the pupils is a huge problem. More harm than good is done if pupils are expected to find information for which books may not be available. In many schools and homes, especially in poorer, rural areas, there is just no access to the information required. Linked to this is the problem of materials to use for recording and presenting information. Simple things like paper and cardboard, pens, pencils and crayons can be very costly and difficult to obtain especially in rural areas.

This is an area where commercial organizations or schools in more affluent countries could come to the assistance of the poorer schools in developing countries by providing project packs containing paper with lines for writing, blank paper for illustrations, pens, pencils and other stationery. Shell Education Service is one organization which makes packs available to schools in disadvantaged communities in South Africa.

In countries where school libraries and their collections are small, inadequate or even non-existent it is essential that teachers become aware of appropriate information sources and services that are available in the community or "real world". Often printed information sources are available in the community or they could be collected by the teacher from urban communities. Examples are Bibles, old newspapers or periodicals, free pamphlets and information and advertising leaflets, and even old telephone directories.

Eisenberg and Brown (1990:102) have pointed out that the new approach to information skills instruction centers on a process approach and that with the exception of Kuhlthau's information search process model

none of the other frameworks or models have been empirically derived nor tested in any formal field or laboratory study. They further point out that there is a need to verify process frameworks in real settings and that it would also be desirable to base process frameworks on empirically derived models of cognition. The integrated approach to information skills teaching in the context of a subject curriculum also suffers from this same lack of empirical substantiation (Eisenberg & Brown 1990: 104).

The independent information skills project, which will now be described, provided the opportunity to verify both the process and integrated approaches.

### **The independent information skills project**

In 1987 and 1988 a consultant (Potgieter 1993) from the Shell Education Service ran a grassroots developmental workshop, for the READ organization. It was held for English second language teachers to teach them how to use projects at three different levels in the senior primary phase, that is, in Standards 3, 4 and 5 (Grades 5, 6 and 7).

Teachers had to learn to set projects with the following aims:

- \* to interest pupils in finding out more about the subjects that were taught in school and found in the real world
- \* to expand and enrich the pupils' knowledge so that they would have clearer insight and better understanding of what information they could obtain in books, periodicals, newspapers, radio and other media
- \* to develop a positive attitude towards working independently
- \* to enable the pupils to reason and think for themselves and express themselves clearly with guidance from the teacher
- \* to develop the information skills necessary to locate, select, organize and present information in a systematic way
- \* to learn to use a variety of media (especially print media).

The teacher could achieve these aims in the following manner:

- (1) By choosing a topic from the curriculum and using it to teach certain information skills (the skills are more important than the topic).



- (2) Starting with a textbook (each pupil has the same one) and introducing reference books and other media gradually.
- (3) Being very specific about pictures and illustrations which should only be used for a reason. Pupils need to be taught when to use different types of illustration, for example, a graph, a map, a picture, a diagram. They need to learn how to draw them or where to find them when required.
- (4) Avoiding verbal instructions, but using clear, sequenced written instructions which if followed carefully will help guide the pupils through the project and ensure a successful result.
- (5) Especially in the beginning, keeping the project short and working in stages. Completing one stage at a time and evaluating as the project progresses. This will ensure a series of small successes which promote enthusiasm and enjoyment.
- (6) By giving the pupils regular guidance, support and encouragement to maintain their enthusiasm. The teacher needs to be very involved in the project, especially in the early stages.
- (7) Using visual media to demonstrate various skills and techniques. Having these available for pupils to refer back to on their own.
- (8) Providing for differentiation so that the pupils who work more quickly are kept purposefully occupied whilst slower pupils can receive more assistance.
- (9) Introducing a loose page system, because then the pupils are not confronted with an intimidating book which has to be filled with information. This system allows an project to be completed in stages and the more able pupils can do more if they wish. Also it creates an opportunity to teach both presentation and bookbinding skills.
- (10) Assessment (evaluation) throughout the process is important and should take into account the variety of abilities of a class of pupils. It should be positive and encourage pupils to develop their information skills and their own talents.

During the workshops teachers had to do projects and follow the same steps, described above, as pupils would be expected to follow. They could therefore experience the

same process. Workshops were held for each of the three levels, but teachers had to return to school to put into practice what they had learnt before attending the following workshop. Eventually teachers, who had participated in this research project, displayed their pupils' projects. The pupils had produced a variety of pamphlets, booklets, posters, models and maps which were of a high standard.

### **Observations and findings**

While much has been written on problems surrounding school projects, teachers still have a problem when it comes to putting this theory into practice in the classroom. Although this independent information skills project does not profess to be a perfect model or formula for project work, it enabled a group of teachers to facilitate a process for the successful development and implementation of information skills using projects in the primary school. This project also addressed a number of practical problems while several theoretical findings were successfully implemented in it. They are the following:

- \* Training the teachers to set their own project topics based on their subject curricula.
- \* The workshopping process where teachers actually followed the same process as pupils would be expected to follow and gained a better understanding of the information skills which their pupils would need to acquire.
- \* Working from simple information skills to more complex, and dividing each level into more manageable stages.
- \* Using a variety of media.
- \* Teaching and encouraging the use of a variety of presentation techniques.
- \* Training the teachers to make their own resources, for example posters, based on the workshop models.
- \* The focus was on the how (process) of project work and not on the "why" or "what".

By working together and exchanging ideas the teachers are encouraged to develop a more reflective, self-evaluative mindset. Improving their competence in the classroom produces results and enables the teachers to teach with confidence and authority. Pupils will benefit in the following ways:

- \* Pupils will enjoy doing projects if teachers are able to give them the correct direction and guidance, in order to produce an end result which is acceptable or good.
- \* Teachers can help pupils achieve this by working with them and guiding them through a process that helps them acquire and develop skills which will lead to independent learning.
- \* It is not the topic or the availability of media which determine the success of the project, but the methods, preparation and style of the teacher who is in control.
- \* By working in easily manageable stages or steps the pupils progress through a continuum of information skills, and build up confidence and knowledge of different strategies which they can draw upon when required to work independently.
- \* This in turn leads to independence and increased pupil learning, through a creative, participative and enjoyable classroom experience and improves critical thinking and information literacy.
- \* The project products, that is the pamphlets and collated books produced by the pupils, can be kept in the classroom collection. This serves as a motivation for pupils whose work then serves a useful purpose. It provides reading material for the pupils and models for future project work.

An observation made by the consultant (Potgieter 1993) was that the process could be started at a lower level - in Standards 1 and 2 (Grades 3 and 4) using shared reading and writing techniques. The teacher could introduce pupils to project work by making "big books". The pupils could supply the information and illustrations which initially could be used as reference books by the pupils in the classroom.

### Conclusion

Although the project described and discussed in this paper was used to improve the media and information skills of under-qualified teachers by means of in-service workshops, it is believed that the process could be adapted and used as a model for initial teacher education. The project

described was based on didactic principles, theoretical and empirical research and could therefore be implemented either with students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, or those from more privileged backgrounds.

It is important for pupils to become information literate, but before this can happen their teachers must themselves become information literate. Teachers in particular need to acquire the skills inherent in understanding subjects like Geography, Mathematics and Science. Lecturers' teaching styles exert an influence on their students, but these cannot be left to chance, but must follow a clearly formulated process, such as that described above. This is one way to help transform the prevailing teacher-centered and textbook-centered teaching style to an interactive teaching and learning process based on available information sources.

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# Using Editorial Cartoons in the Curriculum to Enhance Visual (and Political) Literacy

by

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This paper on using political cartoons with children and young adults to teach visual literacy is divided into two parts: an introductory part and a final section with an opportunity to interpret a political cartoon.

By way of introductory material, I would like to define what we mean by visual literacy; then I would like to synopsise the current research on political awareness among today's youth, and show how using political cartoons with children and adolescents will enhance their political cognition. Finally, I will introduce the political cartoon, define it, and describe what makes a political cartoon particularly effective in terms of teaching visual literacy.

## Visual Literacy

The concept of visual literacy is credited to one John Debes, who, at a meeting in Rochester, NY, in 1969, defined visual literacy as

a group of vision competencies a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory experiences. . . these competencies, when developed, enable a visually literate person to discriminate and interpret the visible actions, objects, and/or symbols, natural or man-made, that he encounters in his environment.

This definition, which surfaced widely and enjoyed a vogue in the early 1970s, when the impact of television viewing on the U.S. young was beginning to be a national concern, stressed picture comprehension. Early visual literacy experts stressed critical viewing skills and used picture book or films to help children be more critical in their viewing.

In the past 20 years, however, a shift has occurred in visual literacy research. In the 1970s, we found out, for example, that visual messages are processed by the brain's right hemisphere, while traditional language arts "stuff"--spelling, writing, phonemic discriminations, for example, are processed by the left.

We know that imagery is based on right brain functioning, and that the right brain can be manipulated to stir and arouse creative imagination. The right brain excels at holistic and spatial learning and has been described as the metaphoric mind. And we also know for sure now that visual literacy meaning precedes verbal learning. Piaget's statement that "sources of thought are not to be found in language, but in the nonverbal. Visual-motion reconstruction performed by the very young child" is absolutely true. The first state of literacy development is that of visual literacy.

Recent definitions of visual literacy focus almost exclusively on the imagistic aspect of thinking. A 1982 definition says that visual literacy is "the ability to understand and use images and to think and learn in terms of images, i.e., to think visually." Also stressed today in the new definition of visual literacy is nonverbal, communicative techniques and skills--the graphic experience, visual literacy as a means to communicate with each other in nonverbal ways. The stress then today is on the communication process. "Visual literacy is fundamental to human thinking and develops through the interaction of three basic components," reads one definition, which are viewing, exploration, and nonverbal representation. Visual literacy today is defined as the active reconstruction of past visual experiences with incoming visual information to obtain meaning. In effect, visual communication has replaced the concept we once called visual literacy.

To summarize, visual literacy now goes beyond critical viewing skills, and encompasses, as David Considine has said, "the ability to analyze, understand, and appreciate visual messages." Visually literate students, he said, "should be able to produce and interpret visual images and messages." Current researchers are convinced that the right hemisphere of the brain can be trained. One way of doing this might be to study paintings, where parts acquire meaning through their relationship to the whole. Another means might be the study of imagery--images that present ideas. One researcher, for example,



Edward Fry, works with graphs, because they communicate a concept often better than words; "the basic transmission [of graphs] is nonverbal and graphs," he says, "pack a high density of information into a small area." The picture book is also a good means to use to train youngsters to interpret images, and so, I will argue, is the political cartoon.

### **The Political Cognition and Socialization of Children and Adolescents**

Several major studies have been published in the mid-1980s concerning childhood and adolescent political socialization and cognition, one done with children from K-4, and one done with adolescents, both longitudinal studies, conducted during the politically volatile mid-1970s. Both maintain that "the truly informative years of the maturing members of a political system would seem to be in the years between 3 and 13, but that the most significant changes take place between 12 and 16."

One of the earliest signs of political awareness is symbol recognition. By the 4th grade, virtually all children can recognize pictures of the American flag, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, the Statue of Liberty, the Liberty Bell, those symbols which have been called "unifying symbols," though they cannot then recognize the symbols representing partisan institutions (those representing the national parties, the White House, the National Capitol). By the end of the 4th grade, although 90 percent of the students know their own state, only 70 percent know their own country (this after five years of flag saluting). Issue awareness among fourth graders is also fairly low (this was a period of Watergate, Nixon, the energy crisis, and the end of the Vietnam War), and there is limited ability of all children through fourth grade to distinguish governmental from nongovernmental roles (75 percent say that television news commentators are government employees; they think teachers are privately paid). In the fourth grade, only ten percent of the children can define *politician*, only 41 percent know what a political party is, and, though 86 percent of them had heard of the Republicans and 79 percent of the Democrats, few, of course, had made any party identification. By the time they are in fifth grade, children appear only to have gained "an extensive acquaintance with politics"; they know what the President does, about taxes, about the electoral process, a bit about the role

of Congress, and Supreme Court, and the role of the senators. In terms of law and morality, they know what a judge does, though only 20 percent associate judges with trials, and, for the most part, they believe that anyone brought before a court has *ipso facto* violated the law. Most young children view law as the institutions that protect people from danger and harm.

In terms of political affect, data suggest the presence among elementary school children of a high level of support for the political system: 90 percent think policemen are their friends; 85 percent say the government "cares about ordinary people like us," and 2/3 say the government would "help us if we needed it." Among elementary school children there is a general optimism about our government, a tendency to feel increasingly positive toward it. However, though they are optimistic and idealistic, they are realistic about the fallibility of government and realize that the government and president can make mistakes. They answer the question, "Is America the best country in the world?" by saying they don't know a better one. Elementary school children are rule-and-law oriented. People need to obey laws; it is essential for the good of the entire society, and their vision of a lawless society is a chaotic society.

Among elementary children, there is a widespread perception of presidential and governmental benevolence; actually 40 percent of kindergartners believe God or Jesus is "the boss of our country", and this is a feeling that they will later transfer to the president, when they become aware of him as a secular authority. By the fifth grade, they can distinguish between an occupant of the presidency and the institution.

Elementary school children idealistically believe the primary purpose of government is to help those in need. They object to protest; a good citizen is one who obeys laws, not a person who votes issues to effect change. Ego-centric children see government as helping them and those they love.

The elementary school child is quite naive politically. It takes skill and persistence on the part of parents and teachers to increase substantive awareness before a child has matured to the point where abstract understanding such as the various levels of government and the distinction between public and private functions are possible. Obviously, it would be nice if elementary school curricula



could be strengthened to facilitate both faster learning and more functional and realistic perceptions of political phenomena. One of the problems seems to be that our children are not taught dissent or diversion; they are only being taught the authoritativeness of our institutions. They aren't being taught conflicting values or the competitive side of U.S. politics. They need to learn to identify public issues. They have an exaggerated belief in the efficacy of their ability to influence government and they don't understand that conflict, competition, and compromise are essential in government. Furthermore, researchers believe teachers can and should take a much more active role in promoting the elementary school child's appreciation for the competitive side of democratic politics and the benefits of diversity, pragmatism, and change. They should be helped to identify public issues and to develop the young child's participation skills. "Overemphasis on unifying or consensual symbols" and overlooking "symbols which represent disagreement, conflict, and debate, with a more realistic understanding of pluralism and diversity, and internal conflict, would prepare children to play a more vigorous role in the political process in later life."

Preadolescents, children in the middle school, are very aware of the political phenomena but they also have an exaggerated belief in the efficacy of individuals to influence government and unrealistic beliefs about equality of political opportunity; moreover, they still fail to understand that conflict and compromise are basic elements of the political process in the U.S. Seventh and eighth graders, in fact, view conflicts between Democrats and Republicans as disruptive and dysfunctional, and also view criticism of public officials during political campaigns as undesirably divisive.

The most significant changes in political thinking take place between the ages of eleven and fifteen, when the change is made from concrete to formal operations. "The adolescent years see sweeping changes in the comprehension of the political order." Though young adolescents have only a dim recognition of politics and government and their understanding of these topics is diffuse, personalized and concrete, by the end of adolescence, the young person has invariably achieved an abstract, undifferentiated and functional view of the political scene. The reasons are plentiful: Piaget says adolescence is the first time

the child is capable of abstract thinking; also, before the age of fifteen, children have trouble conceiving of the community as a whole. Because they can't imagine an abstract collectivity, they can't take into account the present or future needs of government of the community and can't grasp the institutions of government and the concept of representation. Also, by fifteen, the youngster adopts a functional view of law as an experiment that can be amended, or, if ineffectual, can be abandoned or revised, this due to the fact that the capacity to think in terms of "what if" only occurs in adolescence.

It has been bandied about in the literature that adolescents are political idealists at the age of fifteen or sixteen. But recent research indicates that they are really political realists, and, in fact, a recent study suggests that late adolescents are currently cynical and are becoming more so. Unlike younger children, they don't idealize authority, and generally speaking, they are highly critical of the way government is performing. Unfortunately, even though adolescence is a period of vast growth in terms of the acquisition of political information (they understand about consensus, they have a feeling for the common and prevailing ways of looking at political issues, they have the cognitive capacity that allows for the birth of ideology, and they no longer believe in the omnipresence of authoritarianism). Few adolescents care about politics, and, like most adults in this country, unless they personally feel threatened (or unless they come from a politically active and aware family, they will never become active political thinkers. By the time the adolescent is a high school senior, "the ability to process political information, acquire knowledge of current events, and comprehend fairly complex political concepts is about on a par with most adults."

The adolescent period is when democratic beliefs must become firmly anchored, when political awareness must acquire structure and when political preferences must be born to enhance the likelihood of active, informed adults. It is, said one researcher, a "period of great political potential."

As just mentioned, the politically active family is the prime source of political awareness. Although studies in the 1960s indicated that the "public school," as one study put it, "was the most important and effective instrument of political socialization in the U.S.," today the bulk of data indicate that, although the school environment has the "potential to stimulate

future political involvement," the school has only marginal influence, especially at the high school level. The curriculum today is so bland that its content is highly unlikely to induce interest in politics, and, although most researchers believe the teacher could be an important figure for politicalization, most teachers shy away from political issues. As a conclusion to their four year study of 1,000 Pennsylvania high school students, Roberta Sigel and Marilyn Hoskin write in *The Political Involvement of Adolescents* (1981):

From the evidence we have gathered, it appears that traditional teachers--the family, the schools, the media have not effectively conveyed a message that politics is relevant to the average citizen . . . " Commenting on the inadequate ways in which newspapers and television inform the public on such questions, Walter Cronkite stressed the need to engage the public more in its own affairs. "The continuation of our democracy demands no less, and yet . . . surveys indicate that the job isn't getting done."

A similar charge could be made against the public schools and other institutions commonly believed to involve youth in the life of the polity. For those of us who believe that an involved citizenry is still an important democratic goal, the questions of how to raise the relevance level of politics may well be the most important we have posed in this book.

### **The Political Cartoon**

It is my contention that the political cartoon may well be one means by which we could raise the "relevance level" of politics among the young. The political cartoon, or visual editorial as it is sometimes called, is an interpretive picture which makes use of symbolism and, most often, bold and humorous exaggeration to present a message or point of view concerning people, events or situations.

All forms of graphic art that contain critical commentary (Think of the *New Yorker* cartoons as well as the political cartoon.), are alike in that they muse upon the ridiculous and incongruous in life, and they all have the repeated theme of the contrast between reality

and ideal, between what is and should be. The hallmark of the political cartoon and its differentiating feature is that it is usually partisan. (I've heard cartoonists called "opinion hustlers.") Political cartoons seek to do more than amuse, though satire and ridicule are certainly tricks of their trade. In fact, they attempt to influence the viewer to a particular viewpoint, to their creator's way of thinking.

Because of this, the political cartoon puts more stress on *ideas* being presented in a striking way than on the artistry. Although the political cartoon has always been an aesthetic achievement only by accident. (Its purpose is propaganda not art.) I would like to stress that I feel strongly that the political cartoon is an art form.

The subject of the cartoon should have lasting importance. A great cartoonist cannot be trite, even when inspired by a trite event. He has to somehow twist his subject matter into a statement that lasts beyond the event, to generalize or universalize from it into comment applicable to many time and seasons. Most cartoons have a basis in truth, and include recognizable characters and events from reality. In fact, most cartoons center on events, ideas or concepts, or a personality of recent interest.

Cartoons are interpretive. They serve to make sense of political things that are and will be important to us. The cartoonist/critic provides information selectively, winnowing out, attempting to assess what is important, focusing our attention, interpreting policies and politicians and projecting judgment about the system itself.

Cartoons have three elements:

- \* It is a picture of reality. The cartoonist deals with assumptions about reality.
- \* It is a message about what the cartoonist thinks ought to be done on behalf of the deserving. The cartoonist takes a protection of the larger community stance.
- \* It tells us about how we should feel about what is happening.

The political cartoon is supposed to beam out a specific message that political leaders or government officials can do something about--a message about intolerance, injustice, political corruption, various other social evils. The message, as I just said, grows out of concern for what one writer called "the cherished community" and therefore becomes the moral justification of the cartoon production.

The cartoonist has to put his message across in some way that will be striking, forceful, amusing, or all three. His message is clothed in images, which have to be fresh, original, and comprehensible--they shouldn't be too complex, elaborate, obscure, involved or complicated. The meaning and mood of a cartoon is projected through several means: the use of imagery: the choice of setting, characters, costume used, the situation portrayed, e.g., Nixon as a hobo, and the use of symbols and caricature. As we heard when I talked about the political cognition of the elementary school child, there are unifying, national symbols, which are idealistic and uplifting, and which present the moral aspects of the nation. Symbols are a form of shorthand, a convenience, not only for the artist, but for the viewer as well.

To summarize, the political cartoon, a signed visual editorial, is inherently critical and often satirical. It contains exaggerated ridicule, emphasizes more negative than positive, contains allegorical imagery, and is timely. The cartoonist acts as a critic or keeper of the ideals of the community, serves as a communication link between the governed and the governors, and is a keen critic and shaper of public opinion.

### Using the Political Cartoon

Based on what I said earlier is needed to help children become better and wiser political consumers, it is our belief that the political cartoon can be used with young people in the following ways for education purposes:

to teach visual literacy,

- \* to train the right hemisphere of the brain,
- \* to train for familiarity of conventions,
- \* to help children understand about abstractness and symbolism,
- \* to teach decoding strategies,
- \* to help children learn to glean abstract meaning from visual literacy,
- \* to teach about ridicule, satire, and parody,
- \* to train children to communicate in nonverbal ways,
- \* to help children operate at higher cognitive levels through creative and critical thinking,
- \* to enhance the political cognition of the young,

- \* to help youth better understand about conflict, dissent and criticism in politics, and
- \* to help make youngsters more realistic consumers of U.S. politics.

Finally, to understand what the cartoonist is portraying, the young people will have to learn the following skills:

- \* to infer,
- \* to interpret symbolism,
- \* to recognize the use of pictorial, graphic conventions,
- \* to understand subtle visual clues,
- \* to recognize analogies, and
- \* to understand the political or social events with which the cartoon deals.

## APPENDIX

### THE EDITORIAL CARTOON

- Definition:** An interpretive picture which makes use of symbolism, and, most often, bold and humorous exaggeration to present a message or point of view concerning people, events, or situations. (William Ray Heitzmann)
- A graphic way of expressing an idea/opinion relative to an event, person, or another idea or concept.
- Qualities of a Good Cartoon:**
1. Wit or humor, often obtained by exaggeration, satire, or parody, is present.
  2. Has a basis in truth, including recognizable characters from reality.
  3. Possesses a moral purpose/earnestness, leading to universality or permanence.
  4. Reflects organic/artistic unit.
  5. Quarrels with the status quo of society.
- Content:**
1. An issue related to an event, or an idea or concept
  2. A personality
  3. Combination of an issue and a personality.
- Purposes of Editorial Cartoons:**
1. To criticize intolerance, injustice, political corruption/actions, social evils, etc.
  2. To express an opinion, point of view, or reaction.
  3. To prick the conscience of the reader.
  4. To prod us to laugh at ourselves, our bungling, our biases, our banality, our blindness, or bigotry.
- Uses of Editorial Cartoons:**
1. To educate
    - A. To help individuals become visually literate.
    - B. To help individuals operate at higher cognitive levels through and critical thinking.
    - C. To teach values clarification.
  2. To motivate
  3. To entertain

#### Some Skills Needed for Understanding What the Cartoonist Is Portraying:

1. Ability to infer.
2. Ability to interpret symbolism embedded therein.
3. Ability to recognize use of pictorial/graphic conventions (visual language).
4. Sensitivity to subtle clues inherent in pictorial embellishments.
5. Ability to recognize analogies.

**A MODEL FOR INTERPRETING EDITORIAL CARTOONS**  
**An Exercise in Visual Literacy (copyrighted)**

An interpretation requires that one:

- A. Determine the reality to which the cartoon relates, e.g., person(s), event or happening, place and time.
- B. Note pictorial embellishments, considering choices which have been made by the creator and reasons why the choices were made, i.e., their role in the interpretation.
- C. Detect and consider the purpose(s) of any pictorial objects/symbols.
- D. Recognize and understand the use of any graphic/pictorial conventions used by the cartoonist.
- E. Consider how pictorial elements relate to each other and form a relationship which gives meaning to an outside event.

1. Determine the reality to which the cartoon relates.
2. Identify each detail in the cartoon and consider other options which were not chosen by the cartoonist, e.g., rear view rather than a frontal view.
3. What can be inferred from each detail used by the cartoonist?
4. Identify pictorial objects/symbols used and discuss the purpose of each.
5. What cultural/social values are reflected in this cartoon? Or, what opinion is expressed through this cartoon?
6. Are any caricatures or stereotypes present? If so, what are their purposes?
7. If a title has been used, why was it necessary?
8. If there are any legends, why have they been used?
9. What is your personal reaction to the idea/opinion expressed by the cartoonist about the person, event, or happening.



## **Preschool Partnerships: School and Public Library Cooperation to Facilitate School Readiness**

by  
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The National Education Goals were established by the President of the United States and the Governors of the fifty states in 1989 and enacted into federal law in March 1994 as the "Goals 2000: Educate America Act" Public Law 103-227. In May of 1994 the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Texas at Austin held a five day Institute funded by the US Department of Education entitled "Achieving School Readiness: Public Libraries and the First of the National Education Goals." The first of the National Education Goals is: By the year 2000, all children will enter school ready to learn.

The purpose of this paper is to illuminate the need for quality services to preschool children in order to achieve the first national education goal and to identify ways in which school and public libraries can work together to provide such services. As a means of establishing the educational context, the paper will first describe the five critical dimensions that define school readiness in preschool children. Second, the paper will offer a summary report of the "Achieving School Readiness Institute" and the prototype that was developed by the participants. Finally, the prototype will be considered in light of the mission and services of school libraries, highlighting areas where cooperation between school and public libraries can further enhance the achievement of school readiness.

### **The Five Critical Dimensions of School Readiness**

According to the National Education Goals Report (1992), "being ready to learn means more than having the ability to count and recognize letters in the alphabet. Children need to be healthy, and socially and emotionally ready for school" (p. 8). While there are no specific, objective measures of "readiness to learn" the National

Education Goals panel has identified five critical dimensions that define school readiness. These dimension include:

#### **Physical Well-Being and Motor Development**

Health and physical growth, ranging from being rested, fed, properly immunized, and healthy to having such abilities as running, jumping, and using crayons and puzzles.

#### **Social and Emotional Development**

The sense of personal well-being that allows a child to participate fully and constructively in classroom activities.

#### **Approaches Toward Learning**

The curiosity, creativity, motivation, independence, cooperativeness, interest, and persistence that enable children from all cultures to maximize their learning.

#### **Language Usage**

The talking, listening, scribbling, and com-posing that enable children to communicate effectively and express thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

#### **Cognition and General Knowledge**

Familiarity with basic information -- including patterns and relationships, and cause and effect -- needed to solve problems in everyday life. (National Education Goals Report, 1992, p. 9).

### **Achieving School Readiness Institute and Prototype**

These five critical dimensions of readiness were used as the organizing structure for the "Achieving School Readiness Institute." Experts from a variety of academic disciplines other than library and information science were invited to address each of the critical areas with the intent of broadening understanding of the issues surrounding school readiness.

Dr. Stuart Reifel, Professor in Early Childhood Education at the University of Texas at Austin, addressed physical well-

being and motor development in his lecture: "Preschool Play: Some Roots for Literacy." Drawing upon the work of Piaget and Vygotsky, and citing current research studies, Reifel suggested that the physical activities identified as play are the "context within which children learn, explore, and acquire foundations that they will draw upon later in school." Reifel maintained that play is a significant means for developing cognitive structures, enhancing social development, and exploring symbolic thought. In relating play specifically to the library and literacy, Reifel said, "Hearing stories (a social activity) gives us something to play about. Playing (frequently a social activity) allows us to create stories." He concluded with the suggestion that libraries develop "playful, welcoming environments where children can explore and imagine with books" and that librarians help children to "play appropriately in libraries."

The dimension of social and emotional development was considered by Dr. Alice Honig, a Professor at Syracuse University in the Department of Child and Family Studies, College of Human Development. Dr. Honig's presentation, entitled "Children's Socioemotional Development: Implications for School Readiness," began with the premise that "intellectual abilities of children and their potential for school readiness and early learning can be optimized only when their emotional security, self-esteem, and social supports from intimate others are nurtured as well as their cognitive competence." Although children, from infancy, exhibit certain temperament types and patterns of emotional response, their understanding of the range and complexity of emotions is not quick to develop and can be enhanced or hampered by their adult caregivers. For this reason, Honig suggested that libraries can be invaluable resources both in terms of materials and programs, for promoting "effective parenting and thus children's positive socioemotional development."

Austin College's Professor of Psychology Dr. Karen Nelson explored approaches to learning in her lecture: "Learning Styles in Preschool Children." She stressed that contemporary research is utilizing sophisticated techniques for assessing the physiological reality of learning style and its behavioral implications.

Nelson emphasized that the literature argues that we must accept diversity in style, with no single style model purported to explain broad individual differences in learning; that style is being examined in relation to a) temperament; b) intellectual ability; c) developmental status. In regard to the delivery of library programs to preschool children, Nelson suggested, that librarians increase their sensitivity to the variety of learning styles their audiences may seem to display, while avoiding efforts to assess or label children according to style. Rather than "worrying about the child's style," Nelson recommends, "think instead about the ways in which you can use diverse styles in your presentations in hopes that once in a while a child whose parent or teacher has a different style may discover that there is a style that affirms who she is."

Dr. Sarah Hudelson, a professor at Arizona State University's Division of Curriculum and Instruction, addressed language usage in her lecture: "Preschool Children's Oral and Written Language: Issues and Challenges." She summarized current research on young children's oral and written language acquisition, emphasizing that children coming to school have already acquired a high degree of linguistic competence that reflects the values and culture of the speech communities in which they live. Even among native speakers of English, Hudelson maintains that there is "significant variation in the ways in which families and communities use oral and written language." It is the responsibility of the teacher, and the librarian then, to acknowledge what children already know about language, and to understand and respect the diversity of language and language style that children bring to the preschool setting.

In addressing general knowledge and cognition, Dr. William Teale, of the University of Texas at San Antonio, Division of Education, College of Behavioral Science lectured on "Early Language and Literacy Development: Foundations for School Success." He focused on the characteristics of positive literacy environments for young children in home, community, and library settings. Highlighting storybook reading, exploratory writing and invented spelling, "environmental print," and literacy play activities, Teale suggested that each con-

tribute to children's knowledge and cognitive development and to their success in school. "The key," he claimed, "lies in children seeing literacy as an enjoyable and valued part of their lives. We help them see this not by devising literacy lessons but by helping to create contexts in which children experience the power and joy of reading and writing."

These lectures, which affirmed in many ways the role of young children as active and engaged learners from earliest infancy, were delivered over a period of five days to the "Achieving School Readiness" participants. The fifty participants, who came to the Institute from twenty three states in the US, included library school educators, state library youth consultants, youth services coordinators from regional library systems, and practicing children's librarians, as well as members of the early childhood care and education communities. Working in small groups, the participants discussed the presentations in light of their own knowledge and experience, ultimately developing a prototype for public library service to young children.

The prototype begins with a mission statement, and continues with four sections addressing the services, skills and attitudes, organizational structures, and resources that will be required for public libraries to actively engage in the national call for school readiness for all children by the year 2000. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a full description of the prototype, it is appropriate however, to share the mission statement, as well as the introductory remarks for each of the four sections.

### **Mission**

An essential mission of public libraries is to ensure that young children receive services and support that help prepare them for success in school and to become life long learners. This mission is accomplished by:

- adopting the role of "Preschoolers Door to Learning" as a national priority in public libraries;
- centering children's services around the developmental needs of children and their families;
- building coalitions and developing a shared vision with the early care and education community.

### **Services**

Library services for young children and their families must be responsive to the *whole* child, his or her family, and caregivers. Services must address the child prenatally through age eight. Services must be developed in consultation and collaboration with the early care and education community.

### **Skills and Attitudes**

Library staff must embrace the belief that all children and their families are library customers of primary importance and that librarians share responsibility for ensuring that children succeed in school and become life long learners. Librarians must form partnerships with parents, early care and education providers, and other community-based, youth serving agencies to provide appropriate services and support for young children and their families.

### **Organizational Structures**

Realizing the vision of service and support for young children and their families will require new organizational structures within individual libraries as well as in the broader library community. Changes will be required in library policies, in personnel deployment, in facilities design and utilization, in patterns of communication, and in education for librarianship.

### **Resources**

Library resources are the basis for the delivery of service and must be equitably distributed to ensure the attainment of the library's mission. In order to serve and support young children and their families, funding must be secured through public and private sources. Grant funding for youth services projects must be pursued. Governmental support must be sought through the establishment of a LSCA Title dedicated to early childhood and through specified funding in every child care or related bill presented to state legislatures or the US Congress with libraries named as recipients.

### **Partnerships for Enhancing School Readiness**

While the prototype was developed to define early childhood services in public libraries, there are elements that are

equally appropriate for school library media centers. In considering the Institute as a whole, three important concepts emerged.

- emphasis on the child, and the family, rather than on library materials,
- emphasis on developmentally appropriate practice,
- emphasis on partnerships -- partnerships with parents, with early childhood educators and caregivers, and with childhood health care providers.

The first question to consider is *why* should school media specialists be concerned with the young child? Services to this clientele are traditionally the responsibility of public libraries through storytime programs for toddlers and preschoolers. While this is true, it is also true that young children are involved in more formal education programs at earlier and earlier ages. Public school kindergarten for five year olds and an increasing number of pre-kindergarten programs for four, and even three year olds, make this a patron group that schools and public libraries are both serving. Additionally, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) identifies the period of young childhood as extending from birth through age eight. With this definition in mind, school and public librarians share an early childhood clientele that extends through the third grade. At the other end of the spectrum, high school librarians may find an early childhood client group in the early childhood and family studies programs offered through their home economics departments, and in the child care programs that high schools are now offering to the teen parents among their student bodies.

Given then, that school librarians have an early childhood population to serve, *how* can services best be offered? The NAEYC suggests that children are best served through developmentally appropriate practices. Such practices "reflect what is known about how children develop and learn (what is age appropriate) and...are sensitive to individual and cultural variation (what is individually appropriate)" (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992, p. 3). To effectively implement developmentally appropriate practice in library programming takes a knowledge of child development,

educational and learning theories, and library materials. School librarians, with their background training from colleges of education and years of classroom experience, may have substantial expertise to share with public librarians in this regard. Similarly, public librarians, may enjoy a wide range of experience with children from this younger age group, and a concentrated knowledge of the books and library materials designed for them. Sharing of such knowledge and experience between library professionals in school and public library settings, can only increase the quality of the programs offered and materials available.

Partnerships between librarians are only the first of the cooperative undertakings that can and should be pursued. The speakers at the Institute and participants working on the prototype, emphasized again and again the need for a "shared vision" in regard to services for young children. Parents, preschool teachers, child care providers, and health care professionals are all concerned with the growth, development, and ultimate success of young children. Learning is an interactive process. Children must interact with their environments, their peers, and caring adults in order to learn. Similar interaction between all those who seek to aid young children can lead to similar learning. School and public librarians, as an established team, must approach parent groups, child care advocates, health clinic personnel, and early childhood educators, not just as library promoters and materials experts, but as active and involved learners, seeking to enhance and coordinate efforts on behalf of young children. A shared vision begins with shared concerns and shared knowledge. Lasting and profitable partnerships are not based on the question "what can you do for us?" but on the question "what can we do for you?" and more importantly, "what can we do together, for young children?"

### Conclusion

Early childhood is a time of tremendous growth and development. According to US Surgeon General Dr. Joycelyn Elders, "Children know half as much as they will ever know by the time they are four years old." With this in mind, young childhood can be seen as a period of tremendous po-



tential. The work that librarians do with young children, with families, with each other, and with other child advocates, can assist in maximizing that potential.

Dr. Judith Lindfors offers an interesting distinction between teaching and learning. She suggests that the efforts of one individual, through planning, conducting activities, talking, to increase another's knowledge or skill can be called teaching. Learning however, is an "individual's own sense-making activity" (Lindfors, 1984, p. 600). While some librarians, either in school or in public libraries, may not comfortably accept the role of teacher, certainly we can all support the idea that libraries are institutions of learning. Libraries are places where people of all ages, can find help for "making sense of things." Young children need experiences, not just to make sense about what books are and how stories work. They need experiences that address their widest range of interests, that engage them in making sense of the whole of life. Many such experiences can and should be offered in libraries.

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\*The text of the papers delivered at the "Achieving School Readiness" Institute, as well as the complete Prototype of Public Library Services for Young Children and Their Families will be published by ALA

Editions early in 1995. For additional information regarding the Institute or the expected publication, please contact the authors at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Texas, Austin, TX 78712-1276. Fax: 512-471-3971



# Enhancing Information Literacy Skills Across the Curriculum

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## Introduction

The primary objective of this paper is to present an innovative model that will assist both students and teacher-librarians with research techniques. The model strives to improve the level of information literacy of users, in particular students at the elementary, high school and post-secondary levels. This model has been developed within the context of an information literacy research project. After a brief review of the history and development of the project, the paper describes the resource-based approach that the model has adopted.

## Definition of Information Literacy

Information literacy is a set of skills and strategies which encompass the abilities to recognize a need for information, to retrieve the required information, and to evaluate and utilize it effectively. The ALA Presidential Committee on Information Literacy further elaborated in the following manner. "Information literacy is a survival skill in the Information Age. Instead of drowning in the abundance of information that floods their lives, information literate people know how to find, evaluate and use information effectively, to solve a particular problem or make a decision--whether the information they select comes from a computer, a book, a government agency, a film or any number of other possible sources."<sup>1</sup>

Information literacy is, in fact, an ensemble of skills which must be acquired. One of the early conclusions emanating from this research project is that teaching students how to structure, acquire, analyze and synthesize information must start much earlier than at the post-secondary level. This is the main reason that the scope of the original project was extended to include elementary and high school libraries. It is our responsibility, as library professionals, to begin in elementary school to introduce students to the concept of information literacy, and never to relax our vigilance in this respect. This is also the moment in time when school librarians have the opportunity to take charge and become the facilitators of informa-

tion access at all levels of society. Information retrieval skills acquired at an early age will have lifelong benefits in terms of learning.

## Background to Model Development

Before discussing the model currently in development, an explanation of how and why it evolved is in order. Concordia University in Montreal offers both an undergraduate B.A. with a major in library studies and a graduate diploma in the field. In the undergraduate program, there is an introductory course which is compulsory for all students enrolled in the Library Studies Programme. This course, originally called "Introduction to Library Science," progressed through several stages of evolution spanning a period of approximately twenty years. Initially the course was structured in a traditional lecture format and introduced the basic principles involved in library studies. However, because many of the students enrolled in this course were either working in libraries, or had previous library experience, much of the material was familiar to them. Therefore, as a first step towards remedying the situation, the Personalized System of Instruction (PSI) method of teaching and learning was implemented. This system recognizes that individuals have differing levels of knowledge and progress through the material at different rates.

Once the PSI method of teaching was adopted, both students and lecturers found it very attractive. Students could work independently and progress through the course at their own pace. Unfortunately, this method of teaching requires a high ratio of monitors to students which makes it expensive to manage. Therefore, even though this formula met with success for a number of years was eventually abandoned due to financial cutbacks.

As the profiles of the students enrolled in the course were investigated, it was noted that many of the students were not library studies majors. They were students from other disciplines who had elected to take this introductory course to enhance their research skills. Further analysis revealed that these

students preferred the "research" component of the course and were not as interested in "library" topics, such as organization and functions of the library.

Based on these observations, the Programme decided to continue its basic library course for students enrolled in the major and to introduce a new course specifically designed for non-library studies majors entitled "introduction to Library Research Practices." Its objectives were essentially threefold. First, it provides the student with an understanding of the research process and the variety of information sources at their disposition. Second, it assists the student in formulating appropriate search strategies for different types of research requirements. Finally, it assists students in evaluating and organizing information retrieved.

The final stage in the evolution of these courses involved the development of information courses geared to the needs of specific disciplines. The first course developed in this vein was a reference course for science students. Its objective was to provide students in the fields of chemistry and physics with an introduction to the tools in their discipline. The Programme hopes to pursue this avenue and to offer an increasing number of courses geared to research in other disciplines, such as fine arts, economics, and engineering. These developments will be pursued when the appropriate funding is in place.

Several conclusions were drawn based on these developments. First, research oriented courses do meet the needs of undergraduate students. Despite the fact that students are obliged to conduct research, many do not have the necessary skills to access the wealth of material at their disposal. The course teaches them to expand their research skills beyond the rudimentary search in the library catalog or the cursory scanning of encyclopedias. One study discusses the attitude of faculty vis-a-vis students' abilities to find information. According to the findings, "seventy percent of faculty surveyed believed that incoming freshmen to not have the necessary skills to use a research library. Eighty-eight percent of faculty believed that it is important for college students to know how to use the library."<sup>2</sup> While faculty members generally do not feel they should be responsible for teaching these skills, they obviously feel that they are essential to succeed in university.

This unfortunate lack of research skills is not the fault of school librarians who have been entrusted with the students at the earliest

age, and who for decades have been trying to impart these skills. Rather it is indicative of the failure of a school system that while preaching resource-based learning bypasses the essential catalyst in the process, namely the school librarian.

### **The Seagram Research Grant**

The research course for non-library studies students is currently offered both day and evening each semester. While the course is popular and fills to capacity, it can at best accommodate one hundred and twenty students per year. In order to reach a larger student population and to extend the project beyond the Programme, the faculty team of Joanne Locke, Anne Galler, and Marlene Giguere submitted a proposal to enhance the level of student information literacy across the curriculum. The project received funding from the Seagram Fund for Academic Innovation, a grant offered by the Seagram Company to Concordia faculty for innovative projects.

The project is founded on a resource-based approach to information retrieval which assumes that research must begin with the determination of the type of information required to meet a given research need. First year development was focused on the creation of a comprehensive, inclusive model of all potential resources. Second year development is scheduled to include an electronic version of the model available for student consultation.

### **The Information Literacy Model**

The information literacy model strives to be an effective tool designed to help students in elaborating their research paths. Because of its resource-based approach, it makes users more aware of the variety of resources available to them and provides them with succinct information about the utility of each resource, thereby facilitating their choices. Furthermore, once the user has made an informed selection among the potential resources available, the model then supplies a research path to assist the user in locating these resources. A fundamental assumption upon which the model is based is that the presentation of a rich variety of information resources as well as suggested paths to retrieve these resources will improve the quality of search strategies used and as a consequence, the research produced.

In their document *Preparing Students for Information Literacy: School Library Pro-*

*grams and the Cooperative Planning Process*, Barry Eshpeter and Judy Gray break down the development of research strategies into five main phases which represent the Information Cycle.<sup>3</sup> As illustrated in Figure 1, the categories are: pre-research, information retrieval, information processing, information organizing and creating, and information sharing. The information literacy model contributes to the information retrieval category, which is the second step in the process following the pre-research phase. The student enters the information retrieval stage with a topic which has been generated and clarified. This stage is defined by the authors as the "application of differentiated strategies in locating resources relevant to the information needed."<sup>4</sup> The literacy model is the framework which helps to organize and illustrate the steps involved in the retrieval process of a type of resource. It is founded on the belief that research should begin with a determination of the type(s) of information required to meet a particular research need.

The model is comprised of two major components. The first is an inventory and analysis of identified categories of resources. It is important to note that a category of resource can be the item that contains the desired information (such as a directory) or it can be the item that refers the user to the desired information (such as a periodical index). Resources can be available in print, nonprint, or electronic formats. To date, approximately fifty-five categories of resources have been identified with some analysis having been completed on the majority. The analysis of a category includes a variety of different kinds of information as illustrated in Figure 2.

In reality, the identification and analysis of each category of resource is a task which librarians engage in regularly. However, to this point, our research reveals that style manuals, guides to writing research papers, resource handbooks within the various disciplines, and the literature of bibliographic instruction and school librarianship have fallen short of providing this level of detail in their suggested strategies.

The second component of the model is comprised of the individual research paths designed for each category. These paths clearly outline the process which one might follow in order to rapidly and efficiently utilize a resource. These paths clearly outline the process which one might follow in order to rapidly and efficiently utilize a resource. These paths can

be depicted in a number of ways. When presented as a wheel,<sup>5</sup> the spokes represent the research path, emanating from the center which is the research question or need (Level 1). Once that information need has been identified (or clarified), the path to the end material which will satisfy the information need (Level 6) is illustrated through the spokes. Figure 3 traces and defines the process from Level 1 through Level 8.

### Use of the Model

Use of the model by the student requires that each student have access to a number of different elements. They are the list of categories of resources available, a definition of the benefits of using each of these categories, which includes an explanation of the kinds of information to be found within that category, a path or strategy for retrieving the specified resource, and a flowchart depicting the structure of that category. With this knowledge base, the student has the opportunity to work more autonomously from an early age. The student is encouraged to decide on a category of resource based on an analysis of its utility and subsequently explore the selected category of resource. In order for this to work effectively, students should be introduced to the process at an early age. If for example, at the primary school level, students learn about dictionaries and encyclopedias, they will assimilate this information and use it on a lifelong basis. This is a progressive and cumulative process.

For the teacher-librarian the use of the model provides apparent benefits. First, the teacher-librarian can scan and select the categories to which the student should be introduced and locate a basic description and analysis about the selected categories. The initial guidance offered to the student for finding the resource is mapped out. In this manner, the student can work more independently, freeing the teacher-librarian for other tasks. In addition, the generic nature of the model means it can be adapted to any academic library be it school, college, or university. Finally, this process fosters independent, cooperative, and resource based learning.

### End Notes

<sup>1</sup>American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy. *Final Report*. January 1989, p.6.

<sup>2</sup> Rae Haws and Lorna Peterson. "Survey of Faculty Attitudes Towards a Basic Library Skills Course," *C&RL News*, 52 (March 1989): 38.

<sup>3</sup> Barry Eshpeter & Judy Gray. *Preparing Students for Information Literacy: School Library Programs and the Cooperative Planning Process*. Calgary Board of Education, 1989, P. 30.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>5</sup> The idea of representing the model as a wheel was proposed by Catherine Wilkins, Librarian with the Peel Board of Education, Toronto Canada.

# Curriculum-Enhanced MARC (CEMARC): A New Cataloging Format for School Librarians

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## *Some Problems with USMARC*

Users of school libraries and teacher resource centers have had significant problems in accessing curriculum materials in card catalogs (Wehmeyer 1976) as well as in online catalogs (Murphy 1987). Curriculum materials, which may include juvenile literature and audio-visual materials, as well as curriculum guides and textbooks, are not adequately described in catalog records, particularly by the traditional Library of Congress subject headings assigned. Other problems with traditional cataloging of children's materials include a lack of descriptive detail such as a summary note, reading level of the item, book pagination or film running time, or name of illustrator. Even catalog records that are considered "full MARC", and there is a great deal of confusion about what constitutes "brief" and "full" MARC records, often do not provide enough information to link curriculum materials to the appropriate learning environment. CEMARC addresses these problems by (1) offering data entry guidelines for a minimum USMARC standard (in order to clarify inconsistencies in application) and (2) suggesting enhancements that go beyond the USMARC standard.

## *Curriculum-Enhanced MARC (CEMARC) Guidelines*

The Northwest Ohio Educational Technology Foundation (NWOET) is the primary agency responsible for developing the CEMARC format. The NWOET office (Miniere 1993) developed interim guidelines for school library media specialists submitting catalog records to the InfoOhio database. These interim guidelines contain recommendations for a minimum format for "Brief USMARC" records in a union catalog database. The required tags for the minimum record are:

- 008** Fixed Data Elements
- 040** Cataloging source (LC, vendor, local)
- 245a** Title (245 h Materials designator for type of media)
- 260 b** Publisher/producer

## **300 a** Pagination

## **520 a** Descriptive tag

## **852 a** Library name (where the item is located)

The optional recommendations in CEMARC create a new standard because they go beyond the requirements for a standard USMARC record. Curriculum-related information is essentially accommodated in three tags, **520** (the notes field that is required at Level 1 but often missing or less than satisfactory in these records), **521** (which incorporates new indicators for special learner characteristics and motivation/interest level), and **658** (a new index term heading for curriculum objectives). Local subject headings that are not curriculum terms may be placed in **690** as usual. Local library information may be expanded in the **852** tag; **950-969** are reserved for any local and state level project data.

Input for the **520** tag is the usual unformatted note that describes the scope and general contents of the described materials. It can be a summary, abstract, annotation or even just a phrase. CEMARC guidelines include the addition of published reviews of educational materials.

The **521** (subfield **a**) is used to record information about the target audience. The agency assigning the information (source) is indicated in subfield **b**. Examples follow:

**521 0b=a5.** (Reading level grade 5)

**521 1b=a009-012** (Interest level ages 9-12)

**521 2b=a9-12.=bFollett Library Book Co.** (Interest level grades 9-12, source)

**521 3b=aVisually impaired=bLENOCA.** (Special learner characteristic, source)

**521 4b=aModerately motivated** (Motivation level)

A new **658** tag has been designated for curriculum objectives. Subfield **a** contains national, state or local curriculum objectives, taken from published lists or directories. Subfield **b** contains subordinate objectives, if relevant; subfield **c** will list a coded representation of the curriculum objective and subfield **d** may contain a correlation factor (of the motivation level of the



user). The source of the term(s) is noted in subfield 2. See example:

**658 b7=**Reading objective 1=**b**identify, locate and use information=**c**NRPO1-1991=**2**lenoca.

### **Implementing CEMARC**

The *NWOET* project has demonstrated the feasibility of developing CEMARC records at the state level. Roger Miniere (1993), the prime mover in developing CEMARC, reports that the initial catalog of 1000 records (mostly nonprint media) has grown to 15,000 contributed records and is increasingly responsive to requests from teachers for special bibliographies. Each catalog record is submitted in paper form by a school library media specialist, working from the material in hand, and using NWOET guidelines for "brief" and CEMARC records.

South Carolina Education Department and the Southern Educational Communications Association are other state agencies cited in the development of CEMARC (NWOET 1993). CEMARC records can be developed at the national as well as the state level if the 520 and 521 tags are included in LC and Cataloging in Publication (CIP). Some vendors, e.g., National Instructional Television Utilization Center, are also expressing interest in developing enhanced records by including grade and reading levels, full annotations, and special learner characteristics as they are available.

Local school systems can enhance catalog records with local curriculum objectives and special learner needs. *Mitinet*, the cataloging software distributed by Information Transform, now conforms to the CEMARC standard.

School librarians need to encourage publishers of textbook and nonprint materials to participate in the CIP program. All publishers should be lobbied to provide not only "full MARC" records but Curriculum-Enhanced records. Vendors of automated systems will need to design systems that access the enhanced fields in the database.

The automation age has brought school librarians into the mainstream of adherence to cataloging standards. CEMARC offers the best of both worlds, adherence and enhancement.

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# Emerging Technologies: Applications and Implications for School Library Media Centers

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Almost daily, school library media specialists are faced with emerging technologies that help to promote library services and concomitant pressure to utilize these new technologies to enhance programs and services.<sup>1</sup> The speed with which they appear on the market makes predictions of dominant electronic developments rather difficult. Given this rapidly fluctuating situation, the subsequent discussion of emerging technologies is confined to those which most specialists believe will occur within the next five to ten years.

## Digital Electronic Medium

Before examining individual emerging technologies, it is important to understand and evaluate them within an overall framework. This integrated communications infrastructure is referred to as digital electronic medium (DEM).<sup>2</sup> Information, regardless of its original format, is stored as electronic charges in digital form. Once information is stored in this form, it becomes machine readable, inexpensive and highly transmittable. Its universal effect is to permit the creation of an electronic database containing all of the print and nonprint materials in a particular library plus providing access to other electronic libraries via a wide-area network. Although DEM is not yet a reality, rapid advances in the following technologies will make it a salient characteristic of electronic systems by the year 2000.

## Telecommunications

The major thrust for DEM will be precipitated by the nationwide installation of fiber optic cabling (slender glass rods a fraction of the size of copper wire cables bundled together). "A single strand, for example, can transmit the contents of the entire *Encyclopedia Britannica* every second".<sup>3</sup> This telecommunications backbone will serve as the engine that will drive every type of information whether it be a book, recording or video to become digitized. Once digitized, information is no longer bound by time or place. It can be

quickly and inexpensively transmitted through fiber optic networks to schools and homes.

## Cable and Satellite Resources

As a result of the fiber optic networking of the country, school library media centers (SLMC) will also be deluged with an increase in cabling and satellite resources. Up to now, most schools have been restricted to selecting from relatively few cable-supplied educational television programs such as Newsroom, the Discovery Channel, the Learning Channel and C-Span.<sup>4</sup> The potential for proliferation of educational channels is substantial. School library media centers will soon have greater selections at more competitive costs.

For SLMCs without access to fiber optic cabling, satellite technology will expand and improve. Hughes Communications, for example, is expected to introduce "Direc TV" which can transmit 150 television channels through a \$700 rooftop disk the size of a large pizza pie.<sup>5</sup> With the predicted increase in programs and channels, various companies will specialize in educational programming. School library media centers will become the beneficiaries of this expansion.

## Integrated Services Digital Network

Accelerating the digitalization of all forms of information is the development of an Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN). Using the combined resources of AT&T, NCR, Siemens, Hitachi, Telecom and all of the U.S. regional Bell Operating Companies, the ISDN program enables nonfiber optic telephone circuitry to convert analog signals to digital signals. Users can then connect their PC's or any digital hardware to a data wall outlet. ISDN is designed to facilitate the networking of computers and more importantly to further their electronic connection to larger computer systems such as minis and mainframes. The ability of SLMCs to utilize existing telephone circuitry to access databases, electronic mail and the collections of other libraries is unprecedented.<sup>6</sup>

Advances in this area mean that SLMCs will no longer be excluded from the world of information because they lack the funds to pay for hardware once required for electronic access.

### Telecomputer Technologies

Although the telepower revolution is going to blur the distinctions among televisions, computers, CD-ROMs, video disks and other forms of technological hardware, advancements are also occurring separately within these areas.

### Computer Hardware

The capabilities of computers continue to expand almost exponentially each year. Computers initially designed to manipulate numbers, then text, symbols and graphics, have finally evolved into "information integrators".<sup>7</sup> Since the power of the computer is dependent upon its ability to store and process information, computer hardware specialists are competing to increase machine proficiencies in these two areas.<sup>8</sup>

The result of these achievements is the marketing of desktop microcomputers that are as powerful as mainframes. The most recent advancement is the development by Intel of the Pentium chip. Described as "almost as fast as a supercomputer," the Pentium chip is available in PCs priced as low as \$4,000.<sup>9</sup>

These hardware advancements complete another stage in the computer's evolution. They facilitate dramatic changes in the form and function of computers. The first change caused by more efficient chips is to permit computers to shrink in size so that they are truly portable. As such, they will replace the ubiquitous pencil and notebooks seen on all classroom desks.<sup>10</sup> Students will be using something similar to Apple's Newton PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) or Tandy's Zoomer. Both devices are digital note pads that employ a stylus for handwriting on a screen. The PDA then converts the handwritten notes into computer files which in turn can be transferred to networks, fax machines or cellular connections.<sup>11</sup>

Another portable advancement that will be in widespread use by the year 2000 is the notebook computer. Currently the best selling notebook is Apple's, Powerbook. It contains an 85 mg hard disk drive, a 386SL microprocessor and a color display and weighs only one pound. Powerbooks can be connected to desktop

MacIntosh computers thus enabling students to obtain additional information and/or integrate their work with existing data.<sup>12</sup>

A second enhancement involves connectivity. The large storage and processing power contained in a portable computer means that students may use them to access the SLMCs online catalog, other networks, CD-ROM files and even commercial databases. While in the SLMC, they can download research from a database directly into their portable computers, slip them into backpacks and complete the rest of the assignment at home.<sup>13</sup>

It is this combination of portability in computers, coupled with advancements in telecommunications link ups, that will produce what is called the "telecomputer". This device will possess the attributes of a powerful palmtop computer and a cellular telephone in one. Recently the FCC approved experimental trial applications from three cable TV companies to test a wireless local area network. One of them, termed Altair, permits laptop and other portable computers independent movement within a building while accessing information from a central network.<sup>14</sup>

### Scanners

Optical Character Readers (OCR's) or scanners are another form of hardware that will alter information search and retrieval and aid in the creation of full text databases in SLMCs. Prices for 24 bit, 300 dots-per-inch color scanners have dropped from approximately \$8,000 in 1990 to about \$900 today.<sup>15</sup>

Scanners are not difficult to use once software setups are selected. Basically the machine reads in pages of hard copy and converts a document into either ASCII II files or into a field format used by wordprocessors or spreadsheets.<sup>16</sup> Once the text is in machine readable form, it can be incorporated into a research assignment or added to a full text database.

Current advancements in the scanner and the software permit users to scan color images. One product called TWAIN (developed by Hewlett-Packard, Caere, Aldus, Logitech and Eastman Kodak) is designed to permit an image to be inserted directly into any DOS or MaC application, given TWAIN's compatibility with the program and hardware.<sup>17</sup>

OCRs are now cost effective and beneficial for SLMCs to purchase. As a means to construct specialized in-house full text databases or provide students with increased

research and report presentation capabilities, they are a computer related technology that will have important future applications.

### **CD-ROM Technologies**

Of all the recent computer related technologies to appear on the market, none has or will continue to affect SLMCs as much as CD-ROMs. The first improvement concerns storage capacity. With the increased storage capacity created by more efficient computer chips, the space for locally mounted CD-ROM databases will increase and the costs for CD-ROMs as the market expands should decrease. Increased storage capacity makes larger full text databases feasible. Software will also provide better methods for compressing the data, so that a larger database can be stored in the same amount of space. The faster processing speed expected with a new computer chip will facilitate the search and retrieval of lengthy articles on CD-ROM. A third trend concerns the networking of CD-ROMs. With the development of new networking software such as Novell 4.11, Optinet and stackable CD-ROM network players, the same database can be accessible from many terminals thus reducing a class queuing problem and permitting large group instruction.

A fourth trend relating to the increase in the number of databases corresponds to the demand that they be full text. For SLMCs whose users require almost instantaneous information gratification, these changes will be heartily welcomed. Many students in a structured situation such as school cannot always find the time or transportation to retrieve materials cited in other remote libraries. They need timely, local access to information that only full text databases can provide.

The last and most important trend regarding CD-ROM technology concerns its potential for interactivity. CD-ROM is considered by most technologists to be an inexpensive, multimedia medium. With the creation of CD-I (Compact Disk Interactive) by Sony and Philips, a special purpose player enables the user to access a thousand video stills, six hours of high quality sound, ten thousand pages of text in conjunction with a computer software program that renders it totally interactive with the user.<sup>18</sup> In the case of CD-I, new developments in software are equally related to developments in hardware.

### **Software Developments**

The developmental gap that usually exists between software and hardware is swiftly being closed by the design of new software operating systems. As more mainframes are replaced with personal computers comparable in storage capacity and microprocessing speed, they require software operating systems equal to the hardware power. To meet this challenge, several large technology companies such as Microsoft, IBM, Novell and Apple are racing to create software operating systems that can turn personal computers into supercomputers.

Microsoft's creation, Windows NT, claims to be the solution to harnessing the hardware power resident in new desktop computers. With Windows NT, users can work with specialized software only available on mainframes and minicomputers and with the click of a mouse, switch to writing a letter using Wordperfect. Windows NT is slated to sell for \$300 to \$500 thus making it affordable even for SLMCs facing financial constraints.<sup>19</sup> For Apple users, Taligent, an IBM-Apple cooperative project is also working on a similar operating system which is presently under the code name "Pink".<sup>20</sup>

### **Specialized Software**

The creation of new operating software systems for PC's so that they can function as mainframes is an exciting development for SLMCs. They will become the heirs to new specialized software packages that permit greater individuation, easier access and more options. New online catalog software will allow more idiosyncratic access that is more likely to mimic the way children seek information. It will also permit access to materials via table of contents or chapter headings.<sup>21</sup>

Another form of specialized software called front end software will also permit more options. The emergence of super PCs will allow for more user-friendly menu and help screens that can be designed for an individual user or local SLMCs. Front end software will be particularly helpful to SLMCs as they access remote, fee-based or free commercial databases or libraries. Instructions, for example, can be simplified. Natural language queries could be translated into formal searches.<sup>22</sup>

The ability to load front-end software to interface with larger and more sophisticated software modules will make it possible to permanently integrate what are now termed user-selected software options into larger



options. Students, for example, will switch back and forth from accessing online databases to scanning and integrating paragraphs from reference books into their assignments via a wordprocessing format.<sup>23</sup>

### **Hypertechnologies**

Striving to integrate multiple technologies continues to be an ongoing goal in software as well as hardware development. The increasing hypertechnologies (Hypercard, Hypertext and Hypermedia) in SLMCs are directly related to the hardware proliferation of CD-ROMs. Both will have a major impact on SLMC programs and services and will continue to do so in the coming years.

Current hypertechnologies empower computer users to organize and manage material without having to be fluent in the cryptic syntax of a computer programming language.<sup>24</sup> They permit users to connect pieces of information, to forge branches through a body of material and to edit or add to existing texts.<sup>25</sup>

The potential use of hypertechnologies in SLMCs is tremendous. School library media specialists and school library related businesses can design online systems, and bibliographic instruction units that cater to a user's level of knowledge or experience. Students may select the topic and information level to request information. At any point, they may stop when they have acquired sufficient information or gone beyond their level of expertise.

Future hypertechnology applications will be just as exciting for SLMCs as the currently emerging ones are. The first area concerns "published compilations of information" such as encyclopedias, census data and other reference works. In this scenario, all links or connections are created by the author, and students use the marketed product as they would a printed text. Candidates for this type of Hypertext use would be reference books with a great deal of indexing and cross references.

A second application concerns the ability to create active hypermedia. At Brown University's Institute for Research in Information and Scholarship, for example, a series of networked stations are used to provide sharable access to two sets of course materials. In English Literature and Plant Cell Biology courses, students can contribute their own additions and personal links to the original programs. Thus they become active participants in further developing the course materials by inputting their own ideas, findings and

knowledge. Instructors report an improvement in student essays and class discussions through this type of Hypertext access.

The last application relates to the power of Hypercard as a user-friendly programming language. School library media centers can use Hypercard to design interfaces to more complicated software systems such as large academic online systems or commercial databases. More importantly though, Hypercard can be used to retrieve text and pictures from large databases and systematically form them into suitable classroom units. For example, Harvard University's Perseus database contains five to ten thousand pictures and fifty million characters of text and commentary about the ancient Greek world. It is so large that it cannot be entirely viewed or read in a semester course. Hypercard is used as a tool to permit the user to access specific pictures, maps and commentary so that a cohesive presentation is available on a certain topic for use by students.<sup>26</sup>

### **Interactive Media**

Interactive media means the blending of hypermedia, videodiscs, and/or CD-ROMs or CDIs. A more apt term for this merging of broadcast telecommunications and processing communications has been termed "communications."<sup>27</sup> Combining specialized software (Hypertext/Hypermedia) with videodiscs or CD-ROMs has created an interactive system with potential for revolutionizing current educational programs and methods. The individualization of instruction with the use of interactive media will finally become a reality not only in students' classrooms but also their homes.

Despite rapid progress in interactive media, it is still not synthesized into a seamlessly integrated technology. As such, it is somewhat defined by "levels of interactivity."<sup>28</sup> These levels relate to such things as the use of particular hardware, program software and design, and the information furnished to the user and instructor. The highest level of interactivity entails using the computer (with its specialized hypermedia software), and the videodisc to create teaching units by selecting portions of commentary/text or individual images. Interactivity increases appreciable at this level because the user is actually engaged in interpreting, analyzing, comparing synthesizing and evaluating the information. A final step permits users to impose their own voices and



video images over the material and save their created programs onto floppy diskettes.<sup>29</sup>

### **National and International Networking**

With the previously described advances in computer technologies and telecommunications, the installation of even one computer, a telephone line and a fax machine in a SLMC can substantially improve bibliographic access. Through locally integrated online systems, SLMCs can access a wide array of nonbibliographic and bibliographic databases throughout the world.

One of the most exciting new developments to occur in networking concerns the generational advancements of online catalogs. Third generation online catalogs in addition to a full MARC record, boolean logic and keyword searching feature help screens, menus, abstracts and limited full text searching.<sup>30</sup> It is this generation of online or supercatalog that also extends networking beyond local and state boundaries to include the globe. Improved networking software has enabled this generation of online catalogs to serve as gateways to even more databases and networks.

Academic libraries are now loading commercial or proprietary databases such as ERIC, PSYCH Abstracts and Infotrac onto their online catalogs. These databases become part of the library's online catalog through a menu screen thus permitting students to search the local academic library database for materials and, when necessary, other subject specific commercial databases.<sup>31</sup>

Most of the technological advances predicted for electronic networks will be extremely advantageous for SLMCs. Overall they serve to increase access, streamline search commands, reduce the need for intermediary assistance and facilitate use by secondary school students. The first development concerns an increasing trend by large library systems to use similar software. Libraries in large regional consortia such as CARL (Colorado Alliance Research Libraries) and Melvyl (University of California Libraries) have a much easier time searching because the search commands are the same regardless of what database or library they are accessing.<sup>32</sup>

A second trend relates to the development of online systems that can manage numeric data and text of variable length. SPIRES (Stanford Public Information System), for example, has a component in their online catalog which supports a homework database

consisting of lecture notes, answer sheets and practice exams.

A third trend concerns the ability of networks to put images online. At MIT, the library has succeeded in developing a collection of 7,000 slides that are used in conjunction with an architectural course. The last trend and one of the most important for SLMCs deals with the creation of full text online catalogs. Currently available full text databases are not for general reading. Their new features, however, will provide the foundation for future enhancements that will create full text online databases on a major scale. One of these as example is the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG), a Greek text database available through the University of California's Irvine campus to scholars in the humanities. Access is provided by keyword and line number.

As more of these specialized databases are developed and made available to a broader population, features such as structural browsing will be introduced that permit users to view an outline of the topic, appropriate chapter headings or paragraphs. OCLC has designed software called GraphText that supports this type of full text searching. Other companies are expected to develop similar software.<sup>33</sup>

### **Internet**

A fifth trend in networking which is unrelated to future software enhancements or database contents but is vital for SLMC participation concerns access to Internet. Internet is a constantly growing and mutating combination of approximately 280 academic and research center networks that permit users to search the catalogs of more than 60 research institutions. More than half a dozen international connections have been established with networks in Canada, Europe, Mexico and other parts of the world.

Local and regional library consortia, such as the CARL system in Colorado and the Melvyl system in California make their catalogs and even special in-house databases available through Internet. Some systems such as Melvyl limit searching to their catalog and restrict searching of commercial databases such as Medline to University of California patrons. Even though Internet consists of various networks administered by different institutions, it appears as an integrated entity to the user. Internet supports an increasing variety of other services such as electronic mail, file transfers among member Internet computers and linkage

to remote computers that emulate direct connections. Full-text files may even be downloaded from Internet host computers. Examples include the *Bible*, *Koran*, Shakespearean works, *Peter Pan* and Hardy's, *Far from the Madding Crowd*. Song lyrics, news articles, recent Supreme Court opinions, census data, the *CIA World Fact Book* and a wealth of government information are searchable through Internet. The contents change regularly as more resources are added to the network. Equipment requirements are minimal. Users simply need a telephone line, a modem, a computer and communications software.

### **NREN (National Research and Education Network)**

As a response to the increasing flow of data over Internet, plans are underway to upgrade the major network Internet backbone to a 3 gigabit per second level by 1996. This communication upgrade is part of the implementation of an even larger network called the National Research and Education Network. (NREN) will establish fiber optic cabling and digital communications links in every U.S. school thus enabling the rapid transfer of textual information as well as video and audio. Each school will have a computer that performs as a local file distributor of NREN information to other terminals within the school's local area network.

Separate communications links can be established between different or like schools for such purposes as foreign language and cultural exchanges. Collaborative teaching units can be designed among schools that permit them to share resources.<sup>34</sup> The SLMC will serve as an electronic navigator linking students and faculty to a truly global information network.

### **Expert/Knowledge Systems**

Expert or knowledge systems are computer programs created to perform like a human expert in a defined area of knowledge. Most expert systems have four components: the knowledge base, the inference engine, the knowledge acquisition interface, and the user interface. Once designed, the program functions as a "highly-informed insider" within its area of expertise. Users then interact with the knowledge to reach a conclusion. Expert systems, in addition to requiring the knowledge base of a subject expert, need to follow a complex set of rules involving decision trees, flow charts and inferential reasoning. They

have many useful applications to school libraries and education.<sup>35</sup>

Most library expert systems have been designed to help users navigate through fairly complicated databases such as the National Agriculture Library's online catalog. Their expert system called Answerman assists users in finding information in various agricultural reference books and guides them to more specific information by searching CD-ROM databases and remote online systems. CITE, an expert system at the National Library of Medicine, serves as an interface to the online catalog permitting the user to query the database in natural English.<sup>36</sup>

Both of these library related expert systems improve the ability of a user to find information. The use of CITE, for example, which allows natural English to access the catalog would be very helpful in school online catalogs. Most students experience difficulty searching databases that require knowledge of Library of Congress or Sears subject headings.

While these types of knowledge systems are not yet available for SLMCs, these features will probably be incorporated into future generations of online catalogs. In the meantime, school library media specialists should become acquainted with other educational expert systems designed for various curriculum areas such as *Dr. Know* (Ventura Educational Systems, Newbury Park, CA), *A.I.: An Experience with Artificial Intelligence* (Scholastic, N.Y.), *World Builder* (Silicon Beach Software) and *Course Builder* (Telebotics Informational).<sup>37</sup>

### **Neural Networking**

*A.I.: An Experience with Artificial Intelligence* is an expert system whereby the computer learns from student strategies and makes it more difficult for them to pose successful ones. It also illustrates a second type of "smart technology" called neural networking. Neural networks are considered another step in the development of artificial intelligence because they permit computers to solve problems rather than crunch information or data in their usual hierarchical way. Neural networks employ a series of processors functioning in a fluid, parallel networking architecture that simulates the networks of neurons forming the human brain. Similar to the brain in function, they can recognize patterns of information and delegate various functions to other network parts. They can also "learn" from failure in some aspects of the network.

The rapid development of neural networks has exciting applications for not only artificial intelligence but also for increased use of expert systems, computer assisted instruction, and simplifying software. All of these improvements can be expected to positively affect the future programs and services of SLMCs. Nippon Electric, for example, is designing a four-processor neural network PC capable of solving problems, reading text and voice inputs, using expert systems and learning from use patterns.<sup>38</sup> Researchers at Johns Hopkins University, for example, have constructed a neural network that learned to read English by decoding series of printed symbols into words and sentences. The process is similar to the method a human would use to learn to read. Although neural networks are still considered somewhat on the cutting edge, software has already been produced that permits users to install a primitive neural network on a PC for less than \$200.<sup>39</sup>

The promise that neural networks hold for capturing visual images, sound and recognizing complex patterns cause some computer experts to envision them as "smart" interfaces for other computers or complicated online systems. Termed "knowledge assistants" or "intellectual robots", they will be stored in portable student PCs and will learn student information seeking behavior patterns. Once learned, they will shortcut routine tasks and respond to queries and search for information.<sup>40</sup>

### Virtual Reality

As researchers continue to search for the "holy grail" of artificial intelligence--namely the ability to simulate the human brain in a computer--they discover other valid learning technologies that are relevant to SLMCs and the educational process. The most futuristic of these is virtual reality.

Virtual reality involves one or more users experiencing a computer-generated simulation. Usually participants don a head-mounted display system that is equipped with stereo LCD video goggles and headphones. The system simulates a three dimensional visual and aural sensory experience. A tiny transmitter attached to the headgear permits sensors to determine the location of the participant. These signals are relayed to the computer which correspondingly alters the user's point of view. Looking in different directions, for example, participants might see a

main street in Birmingham, Alabama or in another direction see policemen moving towards them as protestors did during the 1960s' civil rights struggles.

In place of a keyboard that interfaces with the computer, participants move throughout the space by using a dataglove. The glove is attached through fiber optic cable to the computer and is equipped with sensors that react to hand and finger manipulation. Using the glove, users can grasp objects, turn down streets, and by pointing the glove move forward within the computer-generated environment.<sup>41</sup>

Currently virtual reality systems are in a developmental phase for technologies. The MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) Media Lab, the Human Interface Technology Lab at the University of Washington and the Computer Science department at the University of North Carolina are the most frequently cited educational institutions conducting research in this area. AutoDesk and VPL Research, Inc. are two private companies also pursuing work in this field.<sup>42</sup>

### Virtual Reality and Education

Researchers in this area envision three main applications for virtual reality in education. The first is "visualization." Virtual reality enables a student to literally see "connections and relationships" that are difficult to picture either as a concept or in a dimensional capacity.

A second application of virtual reality concerns its improved capacity as a simulator of processes, procedures and environments. For years, inflight simulators have been used to train pilots to fly before actually operating expensive airplanes. Virtual reality systems can improve on simulators by increasing sensation and dimensions through a more sophisticated technological approach.

The third application lies with its constructive qualities. At this level, SLMCs house virtual library work stations that enable users to move through a knowledge database comprised of text, sound, diagrams, moving images and three dimensional datafields and objects. Using an electronic tutor or personal digital assistant device to select and save information from the work stations, the students can construct their own virtual reality programs or use the information from the virtual library work station to solve problems, finish homework or complete research assignments.<sup>43</sup>

## Conclusions

School library media centers are at a crossroad. Over the next decade, our institutions will face fundamental technological changes. In an increasingly competitive global economy, it will border on negligence if SLMCs fail to provide electronic information technologies. With improvements in telecommunications, access to multitype networks, declining costs in computers and the availability of fax machines, school media specialists in even the smallest SLMCs should be able to provide users with some form of expanded access and document delivery.

Never before have SLMCs been so essential to their parent institutions. Our media center programs and service are educationally imperative if schools are to supply students with the skills, training and knowledge they must have to prosper in an electronic world environment.

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# Students Becoming Life-Long Users: Vision Becoming Reality

by

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Our world is exploding! It's exploding with information. Just look around: instant communication, interactive technology, networking with the world and more print material available than is imaginable. How can the students of today possibly learn all of this information? Obviously, they cannot. But, by becoming life long learners, all of this remarkable information can be available for them to use.

It is essential for all students to become life long information users in order to become quality citizens in today's information world. We, as school librarians, are capable of ensuring this possibility for each student at all grade levels. I consider this our utmost responsibility. Achieving this goal, however, may require the redesign of a school library facility and a change in the library program.

When I began teaching in New York state in 1964, there were some school libraries and in some cases school librarians but the possibilities for use were limited. During the 1970s, students in elementary school were often scheduled into blocks of time for stories or the teaching of isolated library skills. I was very fortunate to work with a school librarian who saw a need for integrating skills into the curriculum. Together, we made plans and implemented them in our school library and in my classroom. We even designed a mini-research paper for sixth graders. Not only was this interesting and fun, but the students remembered how to locate and use information the next time it was needed. It was, however, not the accepted practice at that time.

In 1980, as a second year school librarian, I was assigned to a high school of 1500 students. It was working with ninth through twelfth graders that convinced me that integrating curriculum was imperative to learning. I realized that becoming life long learners was a necessity, not a frill. There were incredible amounts of information available in the library and it was easy to access. With instruction based upon need, the students were able to use information to write reports, choose colleges or a career and enjoy the leisure reading. Due

to the structure of the high school, skills were integrated and students used the library materials according to assignment. It was a rewarding experience because I was assured that these young people were learning skills that could be used during their entire lives.

In 1988, I accepted a position as an elementary school library media specialist in the Syracuse School District in New York State. Previously, I had worked as a teacher and librarian in a small city, rural area and suburban district, all in New York. The city of Syracuse is located in Central New York, actually right in the middle. The area is known for beautiful lakes such as: The Finger Lakes & Lake Ontario, and the mountainous scenery which is beautiful, especially in the autumn. But our real claim to fame is the snow and the clouds. We are always on national TV and I suspect international TV, for the most snow and cloudiest conditions.

As of November, 1993, the population of Syracuse was 163,860 of which 75% is non-minority and 68% of this population is below the poverty level. The rate of unemployment is 8.8% and the median salary is \$28,012. There have been 487 business failures during the last four years, not including 1993 and only one of five major department stores chains is still operating. It is a difficult time for our people.

The Syracuse City School District educates 22,275 students within forty buildings. There are approximately eighteen hundred teachers, one hundred three administrators and seven administrative interns. Most employees have been a part of this system for fifteen years. Presently, there are thirty one school libraries, all with professional librarians and some assistants. The school media specialists have concluded that with so many young people facing a dark future something must be done in order to assure that each will become a life long learner offering the possibility of a successful life.

It was in 1989 that I set my goals for change. My decision was to turn vision into reality. This decision was shared by the other school librarians in the district and together we

planned a new library program that was adopted by the board of Education in 1993. At this time, I will introduce the plan and then show how it is being implemented.

During 1988 and 1989 the school librarians discussed issues, researched, attended workshops, conferences and meetings all concerned with making changes. In 1990, the district adopted the planning process for a strategic plan to redefine and restructure the district. This plan is based on learner outcomes. Simultaneously, the library media specialists began to plan the new library program which has direct impact on the strategies and action plans.

The Library Steering Curriculum Committee under the auspices of The Professional Responsibilities Committee drafted the final plan. It was a collaborative effort based on the New York State Media Skills Curriculum and the new Compact for learning. In order to fulfill these objectives, students must be able to use information properly throughout their lives. The Syracuse City School District Library Program for K-12 includes a philosophy statement which clearly states the necessary components required if students are to become life long learners. This statement clearly states that unless students are able to cope with a rapidly changing world, their education and skills will become obsolete. Continuous learning throughout their lives is the only way students will adapt to this new world.

In order for our young people to achieve the school district's learner outcomes the steering committee developed enablers. The skills included an increase in levels of development and sophistication as the student grows. Next, the components of a successful library program which are the keys to meeting individual needs of all the library users in a school district were listed.

The school librarians are very proud of this impressive document especially the fact that the Board of Education adopted it in July, 1993. But, how does the school librarian and staff ensure that students become lifelong learners? How does the school librarians and staff turn vision into reality?

First, one must take a good look at the library facility. Is it designed to promote individual and small group learning? Are resources and services accessible? Is the library designed for a flexible program with up to date technology available for use by patrons? Within the constraints of the environment, the facility should

be designed to meet the needs of all patrons. This does not require money, but rather planning. Then, goals can be devised for the future, including securing better furniture, more technology and the best materials available. This can be accomplished if the school librarian becomes a part of the school team making the library program an integral part of the whole school program.

Planning the individual school library program and implementing it is difficult, but very possible. If there is a district program in place it is an excellent tool for planning and promoted a program. It should be presented to the faculty, parents and students. Collaboratively, the group can design a workable, flexible program meeting the needs of the specific school, keeping in mind that each program will be unique in accordance with the total school curriculum.

A valuable professional tool that will help in planning is *Information Power: Guidelines for Media Programs*, which was published in 1988 by the American Library Association. The book was prepared by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) for the purpose of providing specific guidelines for designing library facilities, building collections, planning programs and staffing libraries. The Follett Software Company and AASL created a video *Kaleidoscope* based on this book. It shares the vision of schools librarians, that is the school library being the center of learning where students grow and become life long learners. There are two parts to the video, first the overview and the vignettes of how programs are being implemented throughout the United States. I strongly believe that this vision can become reality. It is in the Syracuse City school district. In September of 1993 one or two elementary schools began flexible scheduled library programs. The four high schools have flexible scheduled programs as do most of the middle schools, but once the new program was officially adopted, the Coordinator of Instructional Resources instructed elementary librarians to implement the entire program as soon as possible. At least six elementary schools have adopted the entire library program to be used beginning in September, 1994.

I am the school media specialist at Bellevue Elementary School on the West side of Syracuse where 500 students including pre-K through grade five attend from September

through June. The school was built twenty years ago and is open, which means that there are very few walls. There is one full day kindergarten, one 1/2 day with morning and afternoon classes of approximately twenty five students. Our grades one through three are educated in large instruction areas called houses with fifty students, or in team teaching situations. Our fourth and fifth graders are in selfcontained rooms or in teamed areas. Most of our classes are inclusive, which means children with special needs are learning in regular classroom settings, but there is one exclusive special education room.

The staff at Bellevue is creative, innovative and positive. Our classes often have up to three teachers and three assistants, which means people must be willing to work as a team. Due to the willingness on the part of the staff to try what is needed for children to learn, changing the library facility and program was readily accepted. These educators want students to become quality citizens in our changing world.

First, I decided to make sure that resources and services will always be accessible to all patrons. Using what was available, I rearranged the entire facility. There is now a story area, references area, a large group and small group instruction area. Several activities can be conducted at once, plus individuals can browse, choose materials and sign them out during this same time period. The materials are organized by the Dewey Decimal Classification System and are close to the designated areas.

One way to guarantee access is by providing technology such as circulation and on-line catalog systems. Our district has circulation systems in all schools and on-line catalogs in the high schools. Soon we will all have catalogs and are planning to network within our district in the near future. All schools have CD Roms and writing programs on Apple Computers for students to use. Today's students must use technology proficiently in order to become a successful citizen.

Next, I presented the new library program to the staff. I explained the entire contents of the booklet emphasizing the program. The faculty agreed with the statement on flexible scheduling and we adopted this type of scheduling in September, 1993. Flexible indicates scheduling according to the patron's needs and promotes integration of curriculum, which is accomplished through collaborative planning.

This library program supports the Bellevue School Curriculum program.

The library program at Bellevue is scheduled by the teachers and me. Teachers consult a weekly calendar and can sign up by class group or individuals for a week, two weeks or up to a month. Sometimes I meet with a group for three days in a row. Individual or small groups of children are welcome at any time to sign out materials, read or work quietly. The school media center is always open.

Teachers and I plan research projects, booktalks, story time and thematic units together. If a teacher does not come to me about using the library, I go to the teacher. I do not teach any skills that are not integrated into the curriculum because students remember what is taught if it meets a need. I keep a log of the activities and projects planned and I include news about ongoing projects in the school and district newsletters. Teachers really like having their class activities in the news and it provides advertising for the library.

The district's library program booklet includes a possible plan for collaborative planning as a model. At Bellevue, we plan formally by meeting as teams and planning projects. Sometimes, however, we plan informally, thinking about ideas that later become plans. Usually part of a project is completed in the library and part in the classroom.

An outstanding article that explains this type of program appeared in *School Library Journal* in May 1992, and is titled, "Flexible Scheduling: the Dream vs. Reality." This article summarizes the program in Ms. Karen Ohlrich's library in Columbia, Maryland, but it is very similar to the program at Bellevue School. I have prepared a short video showing the library program at Bellevue.

The most difficult part of any library program is evaluation, because achievement of certain skills is not immediate, although worth the wait. As students grow, they use the skills taught within the curriculum independently and they also help other students. Projects completed are a good indicator of learning, plus the processes used can be utilized throughout their lives.

The program must be monitored on an ongoing basis. The Syracuse City School Library Program suggests a variety of assessment tools. I continuously evaluate the facilities and program. I work each day to improve the program in order to provide the best for patrons.

During May and June of 1994, our coordinator and a group of librarians have been meeting with elementary school facilities. We have been presenting the new program and encouraging them to open up the school libraries. I am pleased to report that teachers of the 90s are ready for change. They do have the best interest of children in mind and are willing to take a chance on a new approach. Teachers, librarians, administrators and parents do want young people to become life long learners. In the city of Syracuse vision is becoming reality!

# Research in Teacher-Librarianship and the Institutionalization of Change

by

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One often hears the refrain that there is no research in teacher-librarianship, no proof of effect on student achievement, no concrete evidence of value for money: if only there was some strong justification for school libraries and school librarians, there would be no need to advocate and lobby for adequate staff, collections and facilities. However, there is a strong research base for teacher-librarianship, there is evidence of effect on student achievement and there is ample justification for the presence and effective use of teacher-librarians and school library resource centers. Why then are there ongoing problems of support?

First, the research is not as well known to the profession as it should be and researchers and practitioners alike criticize when it took place, where it took place and with whom it took place. If we accepted our own research and built on it we would progress far beyond the generalization of a single experience and the intuition alone of the principal, teacher and teacher-librarian. Nothing is ever certain in a complex world but research which is reliable, valid and replicated has value and worth.

Second, even with what we do know about effective school library programs and services, we find it difficult to put them in place. Principals and teachers can be convinced of the value of the teacher-librarian and school resource center and hold an image of the appropriate and effective role of the principal, teacher and teacher-librarian as partners in the educational enterprise but the implementation still does not occur, and does not reach a stage of institutionalization, of becoming an integral, essential part of the fabric of the school. In this case the research in curriculum implementation and staff development can provide guidance for the successful initiation, implementation and institutionalization of school library programs.

The terms teacher-librarian and resource center are used here as these are common in many parts of the world. A teacher-librarian is a qualified teacher with successful classroom teaching experience and additional post-baccalaureate education in teacher-librar-

ianship. The teacher-librarian performs a unified role, uniquely combining teacher and librarian, and may work full-time or part-time in the school resource center. The term resource center is similarly used for consistency; the resource center houses the school's collection of curriculum resources, including information books and other media and imaginative literature; these are coherently and consistently organized for physical access and the teacher-librarian plans with classroom teachers to develop and implement programs which assure intellectual access by increasingly independent student learners.

## Research in Teacher-librarianship

The research in teacher-librarianship is rich and diverse and recent publications provide useful guides to the research and scholarly literature (see Haycock, 1990; Krashen, 1993; Lance et al., 1993). This review is delimited to the characteristics of effective programs which affect student achievement in a significant way and which have the support of educational decision-makers like school principals and superintendents. It therefore does not include factors related to the selection and management of resources, to facilities or to general school and classroom practice.

There is a positive relationship between the level of resource center service available and student scholastic achievement. In schools with good resource centers and the services of a teacher-librarian (TL), students perform significantly better on tests for basic research skills, including locational skills, outlining and note-taking, and the knowledge and use of reference materials, including the use of a dictionary and an encyclopedia (Becker, 1970; Callison, 1979; Greve, 1974; McMillen, 1965; Nolan, 1989; Yarling, 1968); they also perform significantly better in the area of reading comprehension and in their ability to express ideas effectively concerning their readings (Yarling, 1968). Indeed, among school and community predictors of academic achievement, the size of the resource center staff and collection is second only to the absence of at-risk conditions, particularly pov-



erty and low educational attainment among adults (Lance, Welborn & Hamilton-Pennell, 1993), and of four other factors that predict student achievement—school resource center collection size; school resource center expenditure; public library collection size; public library expenditure—the greatest predictor is school resource center collection size (Greve, 1974).

The evidence is similarly clear that more reading is done where there is a school library and a teacher-librarian; children also read more where they live close to a public library (Krashen, 1993). Students in schools with centralized resource centers and teacher-librarians not only read more, they enjoy reading more (Lowe, 1984). A print-rich environment, including larger library collections, and a good reading environment, including comfort and quiet, affect reading, literacy development and reading scores (Krashen, 1993). Further, providing time for free voluntary reading in schools has a positive impact on reading comprehension, vocabulary development, spelling, written style, oral/aural language and control of grammar (Krashen, 1993).

School resource centers with full-time teacher-librarians even contribute to the development of positive self-concepts (McAfee, 1981).

Why are these gains not realized in all situations and circumstances? First, the role of the teacher-librarian requires clarification if there is to be any improvement in existing resource center programs (Charter, 1982). Principals, teachers and teacher-librarians themselves have many misconceptions about the role of the TL in the instructional program (Bias, 1979; Burcham, 1989; Hambleton, 1980; Hodson, 1978; Jones, 1977; Kerr, 1973; Kim, 1981; Olson, 1966) such that school districts need to provide a clearer definition of the role of the TL (Markle, 1982). TLs need to take an active part in defining their role, particularly in cooperative program planning and teaching and need to communicate their role more effectively to principals and teachers, through in-service programs and through an emphasis on work with people more than management and production processes (Bechtel, 1975; Bias, 1979; Pichette, 1975; Sullivan, 1979). In fact, TLs who place a higher priority on personal relations offer more services to teachers and students; TLs who rate personal relations as a lower priority spend more time on circulation and related tasks (Adams, 1973).

Teacher-librarians require teaching qualifications and classroom experience prior to

further education and training as a TL in order to be effective. Prior successful teaching experience is necessary for TLs to perceive and solve instructional problems (Van Dreser, 1971). Exemplary teacher-librarians, as identified in the professional literature and by exemplary principals, display the traits of exemplary teachers—as well, they plan with teachers, use flexible and innovative teaching and public relations approaches, teach well, provide continuous access, design flexible policies, and develop collections which support the curriculum (Alexander, 1992). More years of classroom teaching experience and more preparation in curriculum development and implementation are needed than is currently the case (Corr, 1979). Superintendents, principals and teachers consistently point to the need for teacher-librarians to have more classroom teaching experience if programs are to develop in a credible and successful way (Wilson, 1972).

The development of student competence is most effective when integrated with classroom instruction through cooperative program planning and team teaching by two equal teaching partners—the classroom teacher and the teacher-librarian (Callison, 1979). Minimal gains in research and study skills can be achieved through instruction by the classroom teacher or the teacher-librarian alone (Nolan, 1989). Effective instruction depends on the cooperative effort of both teacher and TL; stated another way, scheduled library skills classes taught solely by the TL are not as effective as integrated, cooperatively planned and taught programs (Smith, 1978). Indeed, not only do flexibly scheduled resource centers provide greater academic benefits, but students themselves believe that the resource center is more useful in their school work than students in scheduled schools (Hodson, 1978; Nolan, 1989). When flexibly scheduled, the TL and resource center can have a significant effect on student achievement in information handling and use and in content areas. Indeed, the most significant changes in library programs occur when the teacher-librarian moves to flexible scheduling and curriculum-integrated instruction; positive cooperative relations with teachers, administrators and students contribute to this success (Bishop, 1992).

It is difficult to imagine why teacher-librarians are not involved in cooperative program planning and team teaching with classroom colleagues as equal teaching partners to the extent that principals, teachers and teacher-

librarians themselves believe that they should be (Corr, 1979; Johnson, 1975; Kerr, 1975; Stanwich, 1982). If the teacher uses the resource center and consults with the TL about planning student work, then the use of the resource center is greater (Hartley, 1980). In fact, students rate schools more highly when there is agreement and communication among principals, teachers and TLs regarding program objectives, and where there is planned, consistent and integrated instruction in resource center use (Scott, 1982). Important factors which affect TL involvement in curricular issues include the principal's attitude towards the TL's role, teacher preference for TLs with successful teaching experience and a teacher's frame of reference, the number of support staff, and degree of teacher understanding of the role of the TL and the potential of the resource center (Corr, 1979). Perhaps most importantly, teacher-librarians require extensive training in cooperative program planning and teaching which builds on prior successful classroom teaching experience. Programs which educate teacher-librarians would do well to structure programs around cooperative program planning and teaching and the skills necessary to convince educators that TLs are vital partners in instruction (Royal, 1981). These competencies, however, tend not to be supervised in practice to the extent that other competencies are.

Cooperative program planning and teaching as an instructional development activity requires more social interaction with other teachers than is required of other roles of the TL yet there is a low level of communication between teachers and TLs (Urbanik, 1984). Teacher-librarians may also need education and training in social interaction skills. Teacher-librarians in exemplary resource centers are extroverted and independent: as leaders they have "tough poise" (Charter, 1982). Teacher-librarians who are less cautious and more extroverted than their colleagues tend to be more successful; the best pair of predictors of high circulation of materials in the resource center is high extroversion and a high degree of curriculum involvement by the TL (Madaus, 1974).

Since principals, teachers and teacher-librarians all agree on the importance of cooperative program planning and teaching, all three should be involved in resolving issues mitigating against substantial involvement. TLs need to organize more inservice training for colleagues (Callison, 1979; Hartley, 1980) and

educators of TLs need to revise programs to include courses which foster cooperation and understanding between teachers and TLs (Royal, 1981).

There is also evidence that there are benefits to students when school and public libraries cooperate yet public librarians and teacher-librarians communicate very little with each other (Woolfs, 1973) even though students who use school resource centers are more likely to have positive attitudes toward public libraries and to use those libraries (Ekechukwu, 1972). While duplication of services between school and public libraries may be lamented, it will not be rectified by administrators or practitioners in either institution: practitioners even question the motives behind overt suggestions for cooperation—self-preservation and protection of territory override the ideal of cooperation (Dyer, 1976). Adequate funding, staffing and "personality" most positively affect cooperation, while funding, staffing, governance at the state level and work schedules most adversely affect cooperation (Kelley, 1992).

### **Institutionalization of Change**

The research literature provides considerable evidence and guidance as to what constitutes effectiveness in the implementation of any desired change (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). While this overview cannot do justice to the extent of research in this field sufficient conclusions can be drawn which can impact on the effective implementation of cooperative program planning and teaching, and flexible scheduling, across a school district.

The content of effective staff development is research-based (Cawelti, 1989; Griffin, 1987; Howey & Vaughan, 1983), proven effective (Hunter, 1986), practical (Guskey, 1986; Hunter, 1986; Nevi, 1986), and relevant to identified needs and problems faced in the classroom (Daresh, 1987; Elam et al., 1986; Howey & Vaughan, 1983; Orlich, 1989; Paquette, 1987; Rubin, 1987); these are all evident in the effective use of the teacher-librarian through cooperative program planning and teaching and flexible scheduling. Successful implementation requires that this new program have clear goals (Cato, 1990), that the nature of the change be explicit and realistic (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1989b; Pratt, 1980) and pay particular attention to the contexts, the schools and classrooms, in which teachers work (Griffin, 1987).

An effective implementation plan is

based on an understanding of the developmental aspects of change (Fullan, 1985; Fullan et al., 1986), sets clear expectations and manageable objectives (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988), incorporates realistic time lines (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1989a; Dow et al., 1984; Loucks & Lieberman, 1983; Pratt, 1980), allocation of resources and monitoring and feedback procedures (Fullan & Park, 1981), and incorporates the professional development of consultants, principals and resource teachers as well as classroom teachers (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1982; British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1989b; Fullan et al., 1986). In other words, change is a process, not an event like one workshop, and requires the understanding of all "stakeholders".

A district policy to guide and support implementation and a district plan for a structured implementation process will prove helpful (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1989b; Dow et al., 1984; Fullan & Park, 1981; Lee & Wong, 1985; Mooradian, 1985; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988). Priorities will need to be established among competing demands if a district is facing several curricula changes at once (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1989b; Dow et al., 1984); too often a district library media coordinator will lead a change effort in school library programs while other district and school administrators are leading changes in other areas which are competing for the same time, attention and resources—the response of the school is, understandably, to set its own priorities or to ignore them all.

The importance of the new approach, expectations for its use (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1982; Fullan & Park, 1981; Loucks & Lieberman, 1983), and implementation plans should be communicated widely throughout the system (Lee & Wong, 1985; Romberg & Price, 1983). Significant changes in behavior, roles and responsibilities expected of teachers need to be described in detail, clarifying both the similarities and differences with what they are already doing (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1982; Fullan et al., 1986), and teachers need the opportunity to discuss the implications and adaptation with colleagues (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1989b). Effective change procedures also require some pressure to change (Fullan, 1990) as well as a support system (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1989a); this is often done by working with a school staff rather than through cross-district workshops in order to en-

courage both peer pressure and peer support to change.

Teacher-librarians and their advocates will need to work more effectively with senior education staff. School superintendents support the need for professional teacher-librarians and generally understand the potential impact of a teacher-librarian but they nevertheless often set other priorities (Lowden, 1980). Many superintendents believe that a teacher-librarian is an absolute necessity and few would staff a resource center with only an aide, but a sizable minority still see the TL as a luxury (Connors, 1984). While sometimes skeptical about the TL's and resource center's influence on teaching in the school, superintendents nevertheless believe that teachers would notice if the resource center was closed and teachers would have to teach differently (Connors, 1984). Superintendents also believe that the teaching background and experience of the TL may be too limited to support a significant impact on the school (Connors, 1984). Clearly, TLs and their superintendents need to communicate more often and more effectively if successful implementation is to take place (Payne, 1967).

Implementation requires the involvement and support of the right people and groups within the district at the right time; both educational and political criteria should be used to select a district planning committee to ensure the quality of the plan and its acceptability (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1989b). One goal is the creation of a well-informed group of teachers with a clear sense of mission and the confidence that can bring about change (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988); an internal advocacy group improves the chances for change by putting pressure on the people and the organization (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988).

The implementation of change requires persistent advocacy and continual leadership and school support (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1989b). Program leaders, like district coordinators, need to anticipate initial resistance to change, need to deal with how people feel about change, need to deal with conflicts, need to know what can be done to lessen anxiety and need to know how to facilitate the change process (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988). The school library media coordinator can have a positive effect on school resource center program development in the school district (Coleman, 1982); even the existence of a coordinator seems to result in significantly higher implementation of guiding



principles for personnel, budget, purchasing, production, access and delivery systems, program evaluation, collections and facilities (Coleman, 1982), and the higher the coordinator's position is placed in the hierarchy, the wider the range of activities that can be performed in the development and regulation of school resource center programs and services (Carter, 1971). The coordinator must be more involved in curriculum and public relations work, however.

The role of the principal is the key factor in the development of an effective school resource center program. The principal is the single most important player in the change process and plays a direct and active role in leading any process of change by becoming familiar with the nature of the change and by working with staff to develop, execute and monitor a school implementation plan (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1982; Fullan & Park, 1981). Principals are in the strongest position to conduct personal advocacy of innovations in the schools (Pratt, 1980)—through visible and clear support the principal can significantly affect the implementation and institutionalization of educational change (Gersten, Carnine & Green, 1989). The district needs to provide training and follow-up for principals to take responsibility for facilitating implementation in their schools (Fullan & Park, 1981).

Successful implementation requires principal support both substantively (by ensuring resources are available and schedules are accommodating) and psychologically (by encouraging teachers, acknowledging their concerns, providing personal time and assistance, rewarding their efforts, and communicating that the implementation is a school priority) (Cato, 1990; Cox, 1989; Fullan & Park, 1981; Hord & Huling-Austin, 1986; Loucks & Lieberman, 1983; Virgilio & Virgilio, 1984). Successful implementation requires that principals create the climate (collegiality, communication and trust) (Fullan et al., 1986) and the mechanisms (time and opportunity, interaction, technical sharing and assistance, and ongoing staff development) to support the implementation of innovation (Cox, 1989; Fullan, 1985; Fullan et al., 1986; Pratt, 1980). Even the attitude of the principal toward the role of the teacher-librarian affects the TL's involvement in curricular issues (Corr, 1979). Indeed, exemplary school resource centers are characterized by strong administrative support (Charter, 1982; Shields, 1977). Principals in schools with exem-

plary resource center programs integrate the resource center in instructional programs, encourage student and teacher use and provide flexible scheduling (Hellene, 1973).

Plans for effective staff development recognize that change is a gradual and difficult process (Guskey, 1986), provide sufficient time to produce demonstrable results (Hunter, 1986; Rubin, 1987) and demonstrate that the strategies will bring about short and long term benefits to students (Rubin, 1987). Short presentations can be invaluable as awareness sessions and in helping people to make decisions about those areas where extended workshops would be beneficial (Nevi, 1986) but they will not result in changed practice. The steps in effective staff development include the presentation of information or theory, modeling or demonstration of the change, an opportunity to practice, feedback (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1985; British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1989), and on-site assistance to staff in the form of technical assistance, coaching and/or peer support (Cawelti, 1989; Hunter, 1986; Kent, 1985; Rubin, 1987; Showers et al., 1987; Sparks & Bruder, 1987; Van Sant, 1988). This is particularly effective through a collegial support system that values growth activities, provides moral support and facilitates small group interaction (McGiffin, 1990; Paquette, 1987).

Building on the research in teacher-librarianship—through role clarification, cooperative program planning and teaching and flexible scheduling—and in curriculum implementation and staff development—through careful planning, effective leadership, credible in-service and coaching, with both pressure and support—teacher-librarians and other educators can implement the major changes required for TLs and resource centers to become effective agents for student achievement. Too often we believe so much in the value of our programs that we think that a "one-shot" workshop will change the way principals schedule, the way teachers teach and the way teacher-librarians plan with colleagues, and then we are disappointed when these changes do not occur. The implementation of a change as significant as cooperative program planning and teaching and flexible scheduling, however, requires the involvement of all the partners and systematic and ongoing training, pressure and support.

With successful programs in place, teacher-librarians can then assume more responsibility for writing about their role and

about collaboratively planned programs for professional journals read by teachers and administrators (Mack, 1957). This accepted means of communication is not being used to its fullest potential in communicating the contribution of teacher-librarians and school resource centers and the curricular role of the TL (Van Orden, 1970), and this can be done effectively only by TLs themselves (Holzberlein, 1971). It is critical that principals and teachers read about exciting approaches such as resource-based teaching and learning in the journals that they read since they are not going to read ours. The successes of cooperatively planned and taught units of study need to be celebrated not only in our publications but also in the publications of our teacher partners and in the publications of principal leaders.

For an information profession, we need only learn from our research and build on its precepts in order to become that force for excellence that is within our grasp. We have the evidence that we can make a difference through cooperative program planning and teaching and flexible scheduling; we have the principles for the effective initiation, implementation and institutionalization of change. Now we need only do it.

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# Children's Literature and the Holocaust

by

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In a world of racism, "ethnic cleansing," and never ending battles of hate, educators at all levels need to teach the lessons of the Holocaust. The tragedy of the Holocaust can well demonstrate the consequences of racism carried to its most frightful extreme.

The purpose of this session is to highlight the use of autobiographies, diaries, journals, and first person narratives in elementary through young adult school libraries. Diaries and other such writings capture the routines, events, and powerful feelings that textbooks, biographies, and other nonfiction often exclude.

Children need to feel secure in their world and have hope; not frightened by graphic descriptions of brutality. Stories of children who were hidden, those who managed to escape to relative freedom, those who lived through years of suffering, those who lived by their own wits, and the children who perished are the titles that will be highlighted. Examples of librarian-teacher cooperative strategies, suggested sources of resource materials, and interchange with the audience will be encouraged.

1995 will be the year to commemorate the end of World War II. Librarians need to be prepared to participate in the anticipated new interest in this event. This session will enable school librarians to have the necessary resources to meet patrons' needs.

"Tell your children of it and let  
your children tell their children  
and their children another generation."

Book of Joel, Chapter 1, Verse 3

## Introduction

Teaching and reading about the Holocaust are among the most difficult responsibilities that we as educators face. The unmentionables and unexplainables are troublesome for adults to make some sense of; yet how do we approach this delicate issue in our public schools and libraries? Can we teach this horrific event without frightening our students, or do we pass over it and hope the subject will be covered at some later time by some other teacher at some other school? Where do librarians fit into

the scheme of things and how can they be innovators and facilitators in enriching our curriculum, our collections, and thereby our patrons?

Despite the popularity of Spielberg's *Schindler's List* and the book by Thomas Keneally (that has sold well over half-million copies), Lois Lowry's award-winning *Number the Stars* (over 160,000 copies), and the ever-popular and brilliant *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl* (16 million copies in over 50 languages), revisionists gain notoriety and credence through advertisements, publications, and lecture programs. In response, the National Council of Teachers of English passed a resolution in 1993 affirming "that students should read and discuss literature on genocide and intolerance within an historically accurate framework with special emphasis on primary source material."<sup>1</sup>

They noted that in a world of increasing racial, ethnic and religious hostility, education was the most powerful tool to help students perceive victimization and to fight intolerance. Countless communities throughout the world are planning commemorative activities in observance of the end of World War II. How can librarians fit into these activities and approach the topic we all would like to avoid--the Holocaust?

## Present Environment

Our curriculums are still dominated by basal readers and textbooks. The basal readers are highly structured and offer self-controlled vocabularies by writers who have presupposed their intended audiences' knowledge, interests and backgrounds.

Some basals have increased selections from the best of contemporary children's literature; "however the selections are often treated as a minor component of the program, a chance to practice the skills taught in the workbooks and skill exercises."<sup>2</sup> The homogenizing and editing of the material often results in little resemblance to the original source. And, their treatment of the Holocaust is virtually ignored.

Our textbooks on all levels of instruction from



elementary through high school offer little more than a brief touching on this subject. One study of forty three American history textbooks of major publishers found none adequately covered the Holocaust.

Only four devoted forty to seventy- lines to the Holocaust, thirty four titles provided one to forty lines, twenty six failed to devote even a separate paragraph on the subject, and five did not contain a single line.<sup>3</sup> Another study exam-ined nine popular elementary textbooks and found: (1) there was a total of nine sentences that dealt directly with the Holocaust, (2) only one book included a separate paragraph on the topic, (3) there were no references to non-Jewish victims, (4) only one book used the word Holocaust, and (5) none had suggested reading titles.<sup>4</sup> The coverage in high school history, sociology and geography texts was not encour-aging either. Not even the Anne Frank diary made it into the suggested reading lists in many of the texts since no Holocaust titles were included. Of seventeen major history titles examined for grades seven to twelve, only five had more than thirty one lines, with eighty five being the most generous. None attempted to describe the concentration camps and consis-tently ignored any aspect of the survivors.<sup>5</sup>

Textbooks used in American schools are faulted on three major counts: (1) the Holocaust is not given the treatment it deserves in its own right, (2) students are not provided with lessons from the Holocaust, and (3) "they do not draw upon examples...which would enhance the instruction in concepts of the various disciplines they are attempting to teach."<sup>6</sup>

### Using Literature

We know how meaningless memoriza-tion of facts and events are, yet most textbooks offer little more than that. Using literature in the history curriculum, as pointed out by Brown and Abel, can serve several important purposes of interest to librarians:

- (1) To present a broad historical context, rather than just the facts.
- (2) To provide students with insights (daily life patterns, attitudes, values, etc.) of those who lived during that era.
- (3) To get students to empathize with the literary characters.
- (4) To have students compare their personal societal values to those in the literature they are reading.<sup>7</sup>

"Social science concepts placed within an his-

torical setting can provide a unifying structure that is both developmentally appropriate and intellectually invigorating."<sup>8</sup>

When selecting children's literature titles for an elementary history unit, librarians should consider:

- (1) Select as many titles as possible that are primary source (autobiographies, diaries) or are well written materials based on primary sources (biographies and other non-fiction narratives).
- (2) All perspectives during the period are represented.
- (3) In addition to historical fiction, provide a good collection of nonfiction, such as songs, poetry, speeches, letters, diaries, etc.
- (4) A careful balance between enjoying literature in-and-of-itself vs. using the material for data on the historical period must be found. "The process should never be so onerous that the joy of reading is diminished."<sup>9</sup>

So much of what students use from our libraries is based on the recognition that reading original source material is available for most any reading ability and that reading literature can cross through many curriculums. The whole language approach (often referred to as literature-based learning) which is gaining popularity throughout public schools, challenges libraries to provide a wealth of appropriate materials that can be read by a wide variety of students. Personally, I am happy to see that my own children are often supplied with book lists prepared by teacher-librarian teams. Library materials are now central to instructional goals.

The whole language movement is based on three blocks: that reading is learned by using actual texts in full, that reading is a part of learning language, and learning about language is multifaceted. "Children learn best when language is whole, meaningful and functional. The language of literature becomes the heart of reading and writing programs; thus, whole language and literature are inseparable."<sup>10</sup>

The American Association of Publishers' (AAP) Reading Initiative Program has gained popularity and success as interest in literature-based programs increases. Their recent survey of over 5,000 elementary school principals in twenty one states indicates that schools are moving away from skill-based reading programs and 60% of principals viewed their reading programs as "literature-based, inte-

grated language arts or whole language programs."<sup>11</sup>

In June 1993, the American Association of School Librarians issued a statement on the role of school library media specialists in the whole language approach. They noted the following points as essential to an effective program:

- (1) The schedule of the library media center be flexible.
- (2) Students not be limited to only teacher-selected materials.
- (3) Students should choose from a non-graded, wide collection in a variety of formats that reflects personal interests.
- (4) Multidisciplinary approaches are encouraged.
- (5) Teacher and librarians share responsibility for reading and information skills instruction.
- (6) Teacher and librarians cooperate on selecting materials and collaborate on learning activities.
- (7) On-going staff development is critical to whole language instruction.<sup>12</sup>

### Autobiographies

Children are fascinated about the past. "Primary sources constitute the richest vein of all materials on the history of childhood. Perhaps the most valuable primary materials...are children's diaries. The best of them reveal the secret thoughts, frustrations, likes and dislikes, aspirations and fears that illuminate the character of the diary writer."<sup>13</sup>

Autobiographies (and biographies) allow the reader to form a bond with the author. "You watch the person grow, learn, achieve, or even fail. And because what you're dealing with is real, there's a special weight to it."<sup>14</sup> The recent popularity of *Zalata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo* (Viking, 1994) indicates that first-person accounts of horrendous situations written by youngsters can have an impact on the reading world.

In an article about holocaust books in the classroom, it is noted that what occurred must be experienced by the reader, not taught. This means abandoning the history textbooks and embracing children's authors who share the stories of 1933 to 1945.<sup>15</sup> As Deborah Dwork in *Children With A Star* points out, children with far less maturity and self esteem than adults had to deal with the policy of differentiation, such as wearing the yellow star; the segregation from other Germans; isolation from

schools, libraries, parks, etc.; and ultimately for most, death. "It is from the children...that we can learn how they, without experience and perspective, understood and operated within this new and bizarre world with its new and bizarre rules."<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps a sixth grader's written report about a Holocaust narrative said it best: "I loved this book because it sees through the eyes of this person. I never knew how hard people had it. The book is so real."<sup>17</sup>

### Library Activities and Strategies

Staff development programs on any thematic unit should include teacher-librarian book discussion groups. The Association of American Publishers Reading Initiative and the Virginia State Reading Association cosponsored a Teachers as Readers Project in thirty six sites. Funds were provided to purchase children's books and professional literature which ultimately were added to school library collections. Each group agreed to read and discuss at least four children's books and one professional book within six months. All participants kept a log of their reactions. In describing the success of the programs, it was noted that participants indicated in their journals their thoughts, issues, and discussion questions. "That's really what we want children to do with literature in the classroom. We want them to bring their thoughts as a reader to the text."<sup>18</sup>

Professor Barbara Lassman described a seven part Holocaust program for school children:

- (1) Without prior notice about the Holocaust being the next study unit, the class was divided in half: those with blue eyes and all others. One group received cookies. Discussion followed about their feelings and definitions of discrimination. Students were encouraged to discuss with family their views on prejudice and discrimination.
- (2) The second class began with students sharing their family discussions from the previous night. All then drew and wore Star of David arm bands. The meanings of curfews, ghettos, etc. were discussed, culminating with reactions about being singled out as a particular group.
- (3) Next was a study of the economic, social and political environment in Germany.

- (4) Class time was devoted to Hitler's life and how he gained the support to carry out his programs.
- (5) Concentration camps were covered, keeping in mind the sensitivity of the students. Emphasized were stories of bravery and resistance.
- (6) A class was spent huddled together in a closet while excerpts from Anne Frank's diary were read, mostly about her feelings.
- (7) The conclusion of this unit was a dimly lit room and an unlit candle. Students were asked to share their feelings. Some drew pictures, some wrote stories and others composed poems.

Throughout this program, parental support was high via sharing experiences, photos, and memorabilia.<sup>19</sup>

A well organized and unique program is Facing History and Ourselves, based in Brookline, Massachusetts. It is an interdisciplinary, teacher training organization whose target is indifference, racism and prejudice. Founded in 1976, over 30,000 educators, clergy, students and community leaders have participated in their training workshops, which has resulted in reaching over a half-million students of all social, economic, ethnic and racial backgrounds. Introductory three-day workshops (often held all over the world) help in understanding the program's objectives, methodology and materials. Institutes provide the latest scholarship and to support educators already using the program. Inservice staff development seminars and community adult education programs are available. Each year, a conference in Boston brings together scholars and teachers. They have several excellent publications, a newsletter and even a lending library of books, magazines and videos.

Focusing on the Armenian Genocide and Nazi Holocaust the questions and issues faced are abuse of power; mass conformity; how doctors, nurses and teachers participated in such movements; why lawyers worked to deny basic human rights; why some people defied that state; and the consequences of denial, avoidance and revision of history. Facing History uses inquiry, analysis and interpretation to help students draw the universal lessons of these events; try to assimilate multiple perspectives; think about ethical behavior; and to discuss prejudice with students from many diverse backgrounds. It has been written about extensively in the media and praised throughout the world has a highly effective program with

meaningful results.

The Jewish Labor Committee cosponsors a Holocaust and Jewish Resistance Teacher Training Program, now in its tenth year. Cosponsored with the American Gathering/Federation of Jewish Holocaust Survivors (which provides scholarships for teachers) and the American Federation of Teachers (which recruits teachers), this three-week program brings scholars and teachers together. Participants first stop in Poland to visit Jewish historic sites and concentration camps. In Israel, visits include Yad Vashem, Masada and Hebrew University. An annual teachers' conference in Washington, DC includes the exchange of teaching experiences of the Holocaust and Jewish resistance. A large part of the cost of this program is underwritten by scholarships. As a result of this program, participants have been requested to be a trainer for youth offenders found guilty of bias crimes; developing interdisciplinary curriculum projects and inservice workshops; revising city and state curriculum guides; coordinating trips to the U.S. Holocaust Museum; establishing Holocaust research scholarship funds; video and audio recording of survivors; and teaching adult education courses. An Oregon high school English teacher who participated in this program moved to a new school which had no Holocaust books. She convinced them to purchase a classroom set of *Night*. "Although that may sound like a small accomplishment, I feel it's a great victory: 170 sophomores will have the opportunity to read, discuss and write about a novel that they never would have read."<sup>20</sup>

Holocaust survivors are highly effective in the upper grades. Before contacting that person directly, find out where they have spoken before and how their presentation went. Rabbis and Jewish groups in your area should be able to make recommendations. Authors such as Ruth Minsky Sender and Inge Auerbacher are excellent speakers for students to meet. A high school history teacher noted that when she first started teaching about the Holocaust years ago, student reactions to photographs were horror, disbelief and revulsion. Now, nothing seems to bother them. "Even hardened teenagers are affected by the personal lives of these people when they hear the stories from the survivors themselves. What will happen, I wonder, when the survivors are gone?"<sup>21</sup>

The U.S. Holocaust Museum, although rather new, has vast resources that may even be accessed by e mail. Materials include teach-

ing guidelines (why study the Holocaust, learning activities, selection guidelines), annotated bibliographies (by reading level and genre), a videography (by subject) and a directory of Holocaust organizations.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center's Museum of Tolerance (Los Angeles) sponsored an exhibit Remembering for the Future: Themes of Tolerance and Diversity in Children's Literature. An excellent bibliography is available as well as a teaching resources kit.

Elie Wiesel in speaking about the importance of Holocaust education and the difficulty of teaching about it, related how he first resisted telling the story and its lessons. He said, "You can either spread misfortune or curtail it. I teach the children. It's more than a matter of communicating knowledge. Whoever engages in this field becomes a messenger."<sup>22</sup>

### Recommended Titles

*I Am A Star: Child of the Holocaust.* Auerbacher, Inge. Prentice Hall, 1986.  
*As The Waltz Was Ending.* Butterworth, Emma Macalik. Four Winds (Scholastic), 1982.  
*Kindertransport.* Drucker, Olga Levy. Henry Holt, 1992.  
*Young Moshe's Diary.* Flinker, Moshe. Yad Vashem (Jerusalem), 1979.  
*Escape or Die.* Friedman, Ina R. Addison-Wesley, 1982.  
*The Other Victims.* Friedman, Ina R. Houghton-Mifflin, 1990.  
*Don't Say A Word.* Gehrts, Barbara. McElderry (MacMillan), 1975 and 1986.  
*Pearls of Childhood.* Gissing, Vera. St. Martin's, 1988.  
*The Endless Steppe.* Hautzig, Esther. Crowell, 1968.  
*Remember Who You Are.* Hautzig, Esther. Crown, 1990.  
*Mischling, Second Degree--My Childhood in Nazi Germany.* Koehn, Ilse. Greenwillow (Morrow), 1977.  
*We Survived the Holocaust.* Landau, Elaine. Watts, 1991.  
*Lydia, Queen of Palestine.* Orlev, Uri. Houghton Mifflin, 1993.  
*Shanghai Passage.* Patent, Gregory. Clarion, 1990.  
*The Upstairs Room.* Reiss, Johanna. Crowell, 1972.  
*Friedrich.* Richter, Hans Peter. Holt Rinehart, 1970.  
*Touch Wood--A Girlhood in Occupied France.*

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*Behind the Secret Window: A Memoir of a Hidden Childhood.* Toll, Nelly S. Dial (Penguin), 1993.

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# **The Selection, Evaluation, and Integration of Culturally Authentic Texts: A Case for Making the On-Line Catalog Reflect Parallel Cultures**

by

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## **The Cataloging Challenge: Introduction**

Building and maintaining the media center's bibliographic database is an on-going challenge for the school librarian. The challenges can be categorically divided into two substantive types: (1) routine cataloging and authority control issues and (2) problems unique to specific physical formats or generic categories of materials. Resources intended for use in parallel instructional environments or written predominantly in a language other than English can be appropriately included into the latter category.

Descriptive cataloging and classification in the school library should provide effective and efficient access to the collection. The media specialist strives to build a balanced collection of educational resources to support the curriculum as well as recreational materials for students to read for pleasure. The mandate to provide rapid, accurate and comprehensive access to locally available materials is not library-type specific: the theoretical framework, cataloging codes, classification schemes, standardized subject heading taxonomies, and international bibliographic standards do not vary from one type of library to another. However, locally determined requirements and descriptive cataloging conventions reflect unique differences in access requirements and user needs.

Traditionally, materials for youth written in a language other than English present significant cataloging problems. An artificial division between materials for particular grade level does not necessarily resolve these cataloging issues, but, rather complicates and magnifies them. The media specialist cannot assume that a different interpretation and application of cataloging rules and practices solely based on the language in which the material is written will provide specific or sufficient access to them.

Despite our best intentions and efforts in the cataloging process, students will not pre-

dictably achieve a high level of satisfaction without assistance. Potential solutions to this dilemma range from continued use of standard tools and hope that users will conform to the integrated system to rejection of the standardized approach accompanied by a requirement to devise an organizations-specific scheme based on instructional department and hierarchy of curriculum content. The choice is ours; we are forced by circumstances to decide.

A consensual decision is needed to reflect the school's situation alone. The collective decision can specify a classification system, descriptive cataloging standards and practices, and a taxonomy for the library system. Hardware requirements will follow and form the basis for district-wide networking. When we reach agreement, we can begin to implement a course of action.

Unfortunately for the intended users, librarians have directed their foreign language cataloging efforts to the resolution of technical problems. These difficulties include "letter of the law/rule" situations.

## **Background and Need**

To provide efficient and thorough research, reference, database searching, and document delivery to their colleagues the media center staff will need to use current materials and state-of-the-art technologies. These services will augment and enhance current activities, thus increasing the reliability of timely information gathering, decreasing the duplicity of resources required and contributing to the organization's collective productivity.

The role of the media center is to support the curriculum by providing materials that enhance, extend, and support the curriculum. The goals and objectives of the campus, the scope of the curriculum, the teaching patterns in the school and student needs shape the media center program. Media center staff evaluate

and select materials in a variety of physical formats in order to assemble a basic, core collection of materials.

All of the items in the central collection will be shelved by author to maximize ease of retrievability and organization. Items will be kept together by physical format (book, video, cassette, kits, and the like).

Resources may be available in more than one format. In order to retrieve all pertinent and relevant materials for a topic or by a specific author, the media center will rely on a catalog. As planning activities become implementation plans and financial resources become available, media centers migrate from paper card catalogs to integrated online catalogs. Resources will be readily identified in a single database.

Building the database requires significant time and effort. The problems inherent in handling culturally diverse and Spanish-language materials transcend the physical form of the catalog.

Each item in the collection is added to the database. Identifying information provided the author(s), title, subtitle (when existent), place of publication, publisher, date of publication, and series (if appropriate). When the data are present on the item, the International Standard Book Number (ISBN), Library of Congress card number, and Library of Congress classification number also appear in the record.

Subject access is of paramount importance to students, teachers, and media center staff. The assignment of subject headings falls within the discretion of the cataloger. Each item provides content analysis data through the preface, introduction, chapter headings, dust jacket, and promotional publishers' information. To assure consistency in the selection of subject terms, a thesaurus is selected which contains both general terms and appropriate, specific terms. When working with culturally diverse and Spanish-language materials, no single list exists which meets these requirements and also serves as the official taxonomy for the databases most frequently queried by the media center staff.

We must discard the practice of using standard tools in isolation. We must do cataloging differently, shifting the focus from a micro to a macro level. Subject access should coincide with the terms used in the classrooms and studios. Textbook descriptions of concepts, techniques, periods of history, and prominent

personalities should coincide with those found in the catalog. To solve the dilemma of subject authorities which do not satisfy these requirements, we need to adopt a standardized list of subject headings and add appropriate terms from the standard textbooks and units of instruction found within the curriculum. Newer, additional terms can be recorded as classroom teachers and media specialists identify them.

Knight identified these technical dilemmas in her 1987 review. She described six problem areas: (a) establishing edition and publication dates; (b) lacking International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs); (c) establishing names and responsibilities for authors and illustrators; (d) series; (e) choice of points of access; and, (f) subject headings. Catalogers recognized and addressed the problems; she predicted timely resolution and recommendations for improved ease of handling.

During the database building process, catalogers have identified several problems/limitations associated with culturally diverse and Spanish-language materials. Identified areas of concern include the following:

- a. non-existent terms--subject matter identified in the items for which no specific, appropriate term could be found.
- b. broad terms--subject matter clearly more specific than the general, broad term found in the thesaurus.
- c. ambiguous terms--subject matter clearly more specific than the nebulous, general terms which can be confusing or misleading.

### **Problems Encountered Regarding Subject Assignment**

Pre-cataloging examination of the specific items comprising special collections reaffirmed the problems previously identified with regard to subject assignment and accessibility. Potential problems can be addressed by following two distinct strategies.

First, instructional staff for the specific areas should be invited to participate in the media center project committee to improve access to culturally diverse materials. Items would be added individually to the media center database as access and retrieval decisions are reached. Each item can change from its current physical location dependent on the discretion of the committee.

The subject access problems can be addressed through discussion with media center staff and individual, concurrent examination of terms used in instructional units. Subject terms

which are deemed incorrect or inappropriate by the committee should be deleted from the official thesaurus. Additional terms should be added. This process may be tested with a select number of materials to determine the complexity of the problems and to ascertain the steps in the decision-making and alignment processes.

Second, media center staff may identify broad curriculum areas as too comprehensive for the general terms included on the official list of descriptions. Additional specific subject headings with a hierarchy of cross references are essential to achieve the optimal degree of specificity.

To construct a list of additional subject terms for broad curriculum areas may fall outside of the expertise of the media center staff. A team effort involving subject specialists and the media center staff combines the curricular area and database building expertise required to achieve an acceptable resolution to the problem.

Media center staff recognize the problems inherent in adopting and using a thesaurus containing broad, limiting terms. However, the standard subject headings tools do not suggest a specific method for the augmentation and enhancement of an existent thesaurus. The situation is further complicated by the potential for media specialists to purchase cataloging (either paper catalog cards or machine readable records) from commercial vendors which use databases to assign subject terms.

The broadly defined subject terms present a potential maintenance problem. The mapping from one term to another may provide a theoretical resolution; however, the required resources to maintain the integrity of the database and subject list may exceed those available. The availability of the complete subject list with terms mapped appropriately would require frequent updating and distribution and real-time access by the media center staff and curriculum committee members.

### **Proposed Course of Action**

Considered singly and collectively, these important and noteworthy efforts provide a foundation for further work. Each effort presupposes that through the sharing of information, a resolution to the problems encountered will emerge. However, database building efforts in related environments found in public schools, public libraries, and other educational institutions in the process of building and maintaining culturally diverse collections

suggest that the problems are not unique to media centers.

The comprehensive cataloging of materials for youth requires a concise summary of the item. Traditionally, when describing Spanish-language materials, the cataloger wrote the summary in English, thus alleviating the librarian's need to be fluent in Spanish. However, in those media centers serving student populations with a significant percentage of children from Spanish-language dominant homes or recent immigrants (students transferring from a Latin American educational system and present in the district less than two academic years), this approach can be seen as a disadvantage. For primarily Spanish-literate consumers choosing reading material for themselves or their children, descriptive cataloging in English may not have optimal value.

Subject headings used to catalog materials for youth are also primarily in English. One provision in the Library of Congress Subject Headings for Children's Literature is: "Spanish language materials," a heading to be used for basic children's reading materials in Spanish. "Spanish language materials--Bilingual" may be used when the item is in Spanish and another language. Also, a source is available to aid in establishing Spanish-language headings if desired. The Library of Congress has approved the use of Spanish-language subject headings from *Bilindex: A Bilingual Spanish-English Subject Headings List: Spanish Equivalents to Library of Congress Subject Headings*. This book includes a section on "Library of Congress Subject Headings for Children's Literature with Spanish Equivalents."

This work also provides some guidance on name authority work. *Bilindex* is aimed at the English-speaking cataloguer of Spanish-language materials. While the taxonomy is a valuable tool for a group of catalogers, the approach of translating addresses the "letter of the law" (or more precisely "letter of the code") and ignores the "spirit of the code."

First, Spanish-speaking children learn their first language before they enter kindergarten. Words related to the home, clothing, and children may be contemporary derivatives of Latin American and indigenous languages from maternal ancestors (Nahuatl, Quechua, Tupi-Guarani, Arahua-Caribe, Maya). These indigenous words may reflect the geographic area in which the children live.

Second, materials readily available for English-speaking children do not necessarily exist in

a Spanish-language version. Copying the English language cataloging in a Spanish translation does not solve the cataloging problem. However, one cannot help but agree that the direct translation approach resolves the practical problem of cataloging materials.

Balanced collection development policies may not be reasonable to achieve with Spanish-language materials. Because machine readable bibliographic data and review information are not available to the extent of English-language materials, the media specialist must develop cataloging guidelines to address current and future access and retrieval requirements.

Successful implementation teaches valuable lessons. Those lessons are as follows:

1. Library automation is first and foremost for the user community. Access exceeds correctness.
2. Customization of library automation can be achieved while preserving the integrity of national standards.
3. Library automation is a school-wide effort. Classroom teachers and educators must participate in the process, thereby contributing to its success.
4. Planning is essential, but on-going, parallel activities require support.

To avoid a time-consuming, mapping, or realignment project, and recognizing the problems inherent with the unilateral adoption of a thesaurus we suggest the following strategy:

1. to enlist a cadre of classroom teachers, curriculum developers, and educators to review the composite list of subject headings and make recommendations for modifications and enhancements;
2. to field test the final draft of the subject terms list with classroom teachers, curriculum developers, and educators;
3. to modify the final draft of the subject terms based on the field test;
4. to share the results of the field test with the cadre of classroom teachers, curriculum developers, and educators; and,
5. to publish a guide for accessing culturally diverse and Spanish-language materials using the subject terms from the composite list.

### Summary

Rapid changes in technology used not only in library automation but curricular areas as well will continue without relief. The demand to keep current as we prepare our students to work in the twenty-first century pro-

pels us unrelentlessly toward technologies we do not necessarily want to accept on manufacturers' timetables. Technological advancements will likely continue to force us to upgrade, enhance, and replace more rapidly than we prefer. However, the first automation efforts admittedly prove to be the largest.

The flexibility created by adherence to standards, the applications of good systems procedures such as planning, and the willingness to never accept the status quo, permit us to do more with less while even enjoying the experience. Without these components automation produces little more than frustration, unhappiness, and inefficiency. The opportunity to develop a local, affordable automation effort provides an opportunity well worth taking.

The "spirit of the code" deals with the moral, ethical, and cultural aspects of Spanish-language materials cataloging and can be applied to youth and adult collections. Several aspects merit timely and thoughtful consideration by the cataloger.



# **The Classroom Library Project in South Africa**

by  
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## **Introduction**

South Africa is currently restructuring its entire education system following the first democratic elections on 26 and 27 April 1994 and the establishment of an ANC-driven Government of National Unity. The sixteen ethnically-based education departments created by the previous Government are to be integrated to form one non-ethnic National Department of Education and Training and nine provincial education departments. As part of the restructuring process, the practices and projects of the existing education departments are being evaluated to determine priorities in the delivery of services.

School library services are also being scrutinized in the light of pressing educational needs, backlogs in services, and inadequate resources in those communities disadvantaged through previous Apartheid policies and practices. What is required are cost-effective services leading to qualitative and quantitative improvements in the education system.

Adding to the complexity and scope of the restructuring process, is the fact that South Africa is a multicultural and multilingual country. Eleven languages spoken in South Africa all enjoy equal status under the new interim constitution. These languages are Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu.

Some of these languages are spoken by small sections of the community (for example Venda, Swazi and Tsonga), while others are spoken by fairly large groups (for example Zulu and Afrikaans) but not one language is spoken by the majority as a mother tongue. The geographic distribution of these languages further complicates matters as, as a result of urbanization, most languages are spoken in the larger industrial regions and it is only in the rural areas that they are, to a certain extent, localized.

This multilingualism has tremendous implications for education in South Africa. A child starting school at the age of six usually knows only his mother tongue well. Rich as that may be in the beliefs, concepts and

traditions of his people, and expert as he may be in its use, as he climbs the educational ladder he must also acquire increasing linguistic facility in English as that language is pre-eminently the language of higher education, of commerce, industry and the professions.

## **The Classroom Library Project (African Languages)**

The Department of Education and Training, which under the previous government was responsible for education of the Black population of the RSA (excluding the former Homelands), has long realized the importance of developing pupils' language, reading and comprehension skills in the mother tongue thereby facilitating the transfer of these skills to other languages. It is for this reason that, in 1982, the Department initiated the Classroom Library Project with the aim of increasing the supply of suitable material in the mother-tongue to pupils in primary schools.

The Classroom Library Project encompasses the provision of library books to every class from Sub-standard A (Grade 1) up to and including Standard five (Grade 7) in the African language taught in that classroom. Through this project children are introduced to books at an early age as books are integrated into their classroom experience from the very first grade. It is hoped that this will be of lasting value, far beyond the confines of classroom and curriculum, as a reading culture is inculcated in these children, forming the basis of a lifelong skill essential for personal development and empowerment in a fast changing society.

Because of the scope of the project (there are currently approximately 7,000 primary schools involved), it was decided to implement it in different stages (Phases). The initial aim was to provide each school annually with ten titles per class per standard in the African language taught in that class. The ultimate objective was originally set at ninety titles per standard (per class).

This objective was, however, not fully realized. Some years, owing to a lack of adequate funding, only five or six titles could be



purchased per standard. Problems associated with the translation of the titles into all the African languages taught in the schools were also experienced. (Up to now eight African languages have been taught at schools under the Department of Education and Training). It was also decided to supply Public schools (mainly in urban areas) and State Aided schools (mainly farm schools in rural areas) with library books every alternate year (See Appendix).

At present, the procedure for supplying books is as follows:

Publishers are invited by the Department to submit manuscripts with a view to their translation into the eight African languages taught in schools. The books are carefully selected as relevant children's literature, fiction as well as subject literature, depicting the real world and written in a narrative style of literary merit, is required for the project.

Although in the past it was necessary to depend mainly on translations as few books were written in African languages, today preference is given to original works in African languages. If translations are submitted, manuscripts must be presented in Afrikaans or English and at least one African language.

A panel, consisting of primary teachers and advisers, representative of the different language groups, assesses the relevancy of the content for the target groups (standards) concerned. Teachers and other persons with advanced qualifications in the African languages concerned are employed on a contractual basis (remunerated according to set hourly tariffs) to edit the page proofs for the Department. The final selection, made according to international educational and library criteria, rests with the selectors of the Media Centre Services Sub-directorate of the Department of Education and Training.

Publishers are encouraged to produce books which are as aesthetically pleasing as possible as the project aims at instilling a love of books and reading in pupils. Clear guidelines (specifications) are made available as to the approximate number of words per book per standard (grade) and the physical production of books, for example, the quality of the paper, letter size and type, and format. These specifications were drawn up after an analysis by departmental officials of the costing of the production of library books, and in consultation with other educationists, printers and

publishers.

Before the Department places any orders, publishers are required to submit one tender price for each title across all eight languages into which the title has been translated. The purpose of this stipulation is to ensure that the languages spoken by small minorities, for example Venda, Tsonga and Swazi, are not disadvantaged because of higher costs resulting from limited print-runs.

In this way, attractive books which are educationally sound are available at affordable prices in the African languages taught in South African schools. Various problems are inherent in the process of translating books into African languages. Problem areas include:

### **Shortcomings in Standardization**

In South Africa each African language has its own Language Board which is responsible for the standardization and development of that particular language. These bodies issue terminology lists incorporating the latest language and spelling rules adopted by the various Boards. However, these terminology lists are not published on a regular basis and are not widely distributed. As a result it is often very difficult to get consensus on the spelling and usage of certain words and expressions among language experts and between publishers and the editors employed by the Department.

In addition, the usage of a particular language may differ from region to region and the dialects spoken in townships often differ from those spoken in rural areas. Furthermore, some of the languages, such as Swazi, Xhosa and Zulu which fall in the same language group (Nguni), are similar; this also presents problems in translation.

### **Inadequate Vocabulary Development**

On the whole African languages have not yet been developed sufficiently to incorporate all the modern technical and scientific vocabulary. This restricts the translation of non-fiction books.

### **Dearth of Appropriate Texts for Translation**

Because the Classroom Library Project is concerned with library books for primary pupils, it is of the utmost importance that children are able to identify with the characters and with the setting and cultural context of the books. Many texts available for translation do not meet these requirements.

### **Shortage of Language Experts Not Already Involved with the Book Industry**

To ensure objectivity and neutrality and to prevent favoritism, it is imperative that language experts employed by the Department to evaluate manuscripts have no links with the publishing industry. As many language experts (especially departmental officials) are approached by publishers to act as authors, translators and editors, it is often very difficult for the Department to obtain the services of neutral, unattached experts. It is precisely for this reason that the Department had to interrupt the provision of books in the African languages during 1990 and 1991. (See Appendix.)

### **Management and Quality Control**

The continuous management and control of the project is very important but also time-consuming, especially the editing of texts in the African languages. To facilitate quality control, various control points have been built into the process, for example, the submission of final page proofs and inspection copies to ensure that the text is correct and the production complies with the specifications. Future of the Classroom Library Project in the new education dispensation

If the new government is serious about its commitment to the equality of all eleven languages, it is essential that this project continues in the new education dispensation. As stated by Professor Lenake of Unisa during an INFO AFRICA NOVA Conference on Publishing and Distribution in Africa, held on 19 - 20 May 1994, writing and publishing in the vernacular is only viable through the school market. Thus, only if publishers are assured of bulk purchasing by the government, will they be in a position to publish children's books in all the African languages taught in South African schools. This is especially the case with the minority languages, such as Venda, Swazi and Tsonga. At present, where children's books are published in African languages for the open market, they are mainly in Zulu, Xhosa and Northern Sotho.

A decision is still to be taken as to the future of the Project. If it is decided that the Project is to continue, a decision will also have to be taken as to whether it will be run at national level or at provincial level, perhaps as a cooperative project according to the language distribution in a particular province. In that case, the project could be coordinated at national level.

### **The Classroom Library Concept**

Some people in developing countries such as South Africa appear to be of the opinion that classroom libraries are inferior substitutes for centralized school libraries - this sentiment was also expressed during the aforementioned INFO AFRICA NOVA Conference. However, although the decision, taken by the Department in 1982, to foster classroom library collections in primary schools was taken partly because the provision of centralized school libraries to primary schools was not found to be economically viable - in 1993 there were approximately 7 000 primary schools under the jurisdiction of the Department (South Africa. Department of Education and Training. 1993) - there is a definite didactic advantage in having library resources available where teaching and learning take place. Liesener (1985:12) points out that there is a solid relationship between proximity and use. The greater the distance, either physically or psychologically, the less likely it is that the resource will be used.

Mabomba (1990:15) believes that primary school graduates or dropouts who have acquired reading skills and habits are likely to remain literate in their later lives, given the proper literate environment. He is of the opinion that, although the influence of illiteracy is very strong in Africa, especially in the rural areas, the presence of easily accessible school library services will help to protect children from such influences. Classroom libraries can make an important contribution in this regard. This view is shared by READ, a Non-Government Organization which renders a supplementary school library service to schools in South Africa (READ. 1994:4).

Notwithstanding the advantages of classroom library collections, particularly in primary schools and the costs involved in supplying and equipping viable centralized libraries, there are high expectations that the new government will provide centralized school libraries for all schools in South Africa. If, however, one considers that there are more than 26 000 schools (South Africa. Department of National Education. 1992:10), it is doubtful whether the new government will be able to fulfil these expectations, especially in the light of the pressing need for additional classrooms.

Critics of the classroom library concept should note, however, the growing trend towards classroom libraries, even in developed countries. In Finland, for example, library accommodation also presents problems but, as

Haapsaari (1991:18) points out, very often the appreciation of the school library depends on the quality of its premises and fittings. One suggested solution is that emphasis should be placed on developing classroom libraries in Finland. In the report of The English Coalition Conference: Democracy through Language, a 21-day conference held in the USA by the National Council of Teachers of English and the Modern Language Association in 1987 (Barron, 1989:47), the development of the classroom library that "celebrates the diversity, backgrounds, interests, and potential of children" is also encouraged. It would therefore appear that the provision of classroom collections, at least as an interim measure, could be a possible means for the new government to ensure that all primary pupils have access to a variety of library resources, thus upgrading the quality of school education. (Bawa, 1993:179; Töttemeyer, 1994).

### Effective Utilization of School Library Resources

Whether access to school library resources is provided by means of a classroom collection or a centralized school library is, however, not the decisive factor in assuring quality resource-based teaching and learning. It is well known that the mere provision of facilities does not necessarily lead to student gains in learning, to enriched learning experiences, or to improved teaching, but that the use of libraries and library materials needs to be mediated for maximum benefit (National Education Coordinating Committee, 1992:10). This fact was brought home to the Department when it was found that school library resources which had been provided, were grossly under-utilized by teachers and pupils. Furthermore, the provision of school library resources has had little impact on the teaching practices which have remained predominantly teacher- and textbook centered.

It is for this reason that it was decided to develop supportive material to assist primary teachers in fully utilizing the classroom library material provided by the Department. A teaching guide and video Using books is fun, based on the English and Afrikaans books provided to schools during 1990 and 1991 has thus been developed. This guide analyses the books and provides ideas for using the books across the curriculum in classroom teaching. It is hoped that this guide and video will stimulate the use of classroom library material and contribute

towards the promotion of resource-based learning and teaching in primary schools.

### Conclusion

The new government has stated that lifelong learning is an essential structural objective for education if the objectives of a democratic society are to be met (African National Congress. Education Department, 1994:73). The provision of classroom collections to primary schools and the Classroom Library Project endeavors to make an important contribution in this regard.

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# APPENDIX

## Provision of Books to Primary Schools Through the Classroom Library Project

Phase	Year	Titles	No. Of Books	Language	Spent	Schools	Classes
1	1983	40	483,000	8 African Languages	R1,400,000	Public Primary 1,220	SSA-STD 2
2	1984	40	251,000	8 African Languages	R700,000	State Aided Primary (Farm Schools) 5,500	SSA-STD 2
3	1985	69	85,000	English Afrikaans	R600,000	Public Primary 1,440	STD 3-5
4	1986	37	805,500	8 African Languages	R2,800,000	Public Primary 470	SSA-STD 5
5	1987	37	550,000	5 African Languages	R1,990,000	State Aided Primary (Farm Schools) 5,700	SSA-STD 5
6	1988	75	460,000	8 African Languages	R2,800,000	Public Primary 600	SSA-STD 5
7	1989	75	411,000	8 African Languages	R2,400,000	State-Aided Primary (Farm Schools) 5,700	SSA-STD 5
8	1990	52	173,000	English Afrikaans	R3,300,000	Public Primary Schools 1,200	STD 3-5
9	1991	36	134,000	English Afrikaans	R2,700,000	State-Aided Primary (Farm Schools) 4,600	STD 3-5
10	1993	32	314,000	8 African Languages	R3, 500, 000	Public Primary School (1,699) 1,700	*SSA STD 2

SSA=Grade 1=1st Year of formal schooling  
 Republic of South Africa, Department of Education & Training, Sub-Directorate Educational Technology, Media Centre Services Section, 1993. *Information Sheet*, p.4.



# Incorporating Oral History into the Curriculum

by

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## What Is Oral History?

Oral history is "the recording and preserving of planned interviews with selected persons able to narrate recollected memory and thereby aid the reconstruction of the past."<sup>1</sup> It is a process that aids in the reconstruction of the past and in preserving and documenting culture. Oral history is as old as human memory and as recent as yesterday's news. Oral history is an extension of the art of storytelling. While oral literatures predate the written word, oral history as a research method dates only from the 1940s and the availability of portable recording equipment. Classroom oral history has been documented since the late 1960s.<sup>2</sup> Students of all ages, from elementary grades through graduate school, have experienced oral history in classes across the curriculum.

There is currently much interest in oral history as researchers have, in general, rediscovered qualitative methods of data gathering. Professional organizations in the field of library and information science, including the Music Library Association (U.S. A.) and the Association for Library Services to Children (a division of the American Library Association) have, within the past several years, ventured into large, national efforts to record their history through the reminiscences of key players.

The purpose of this paper is to introduce the concept of oral history with an emphasis on how oral history efforts can be incorporated into the curriculum to involve students of all ages. The final two pages of this article is a pathfinder or guide for librarians and teachers on how to locate further information. Cited are books, articles, indexes, documents, and an organization. These sources should provide sufficient background on the theory, method, and ethics involved in initiating an oral history program. The resources should also provide examples of how oral history has been used in the curriculum and how to locate other such examples.

Both authors have been involved in oral history over a number of years. Ms. Craiglow has been formally trained in oral history

methodology through a women's studies program. Dr. Roy has served as the Oral History Coordinator for a local history museum in Arizona (U.S.A), served as member and chair of the Texas (U.S.A) Library Association's Archives and Oral History Committee, and served on the Oral Record Task Force and Oral Record Project Advisory Committee for the Association for Library Services to Children (U.S.A.). Her professional associations have included memberships in the Oral History Association (U.S.A) and the Texas (U.S.A) Oral History Association. Her articles on oral history have been published in the *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries* and in the *Texas Library Journal*.<sup>3</sup> Since 1989, Dr. Roy has included oral history activities in her graduate course on public libraries and in individualized study work with students in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Texas at Austin.

## ORGANIZING AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

### Becoming Acquainted with the Methodology

The first step in preparing for an oral history project is to read about the technique of oral history. There are a number of good training manuals available, some of which are cited on the pathfinder portion of this paper. In addition to purchasing a manual, each person engaging in oral history should secure a copy of *The Guidelines and Principles of the Oral History Association*, revised in 1992.<sup>4</sup> The Oral History Association (OHA) principles outline the responsibilities of the oral historian to those being interviewed, to the public and fellow researchers, and to agencies and institutions that fund oral history work or house and/or make access to the interviews. The guidelines provide a framework for conduct covering all steps in the oral history project development. Especially relevant are guidelines covering ethical and legal issues and special guidelines for educators and students to consider. The forty-item bibliography at the end of this pamphlet includes English language publications as well as

several publications in French and Spanish.

### **Assessing the Appropriateness of Oral History in the Curriculum**

Once the librarian/educator is versed in the process of oral history he or she must decide whether the methodology fits within the educational institution's curricular goals. This decision is based on such evidence as the institutional support in staffing, equipment, and supplies; institutional approval of innovative teaching approaches; existing curricular mandates; student aptitude and interest; and time available for training, interviewing, and preparing products from the interviews. In some cases, the librarian/educator may choose to engage his or her students in "passive oral history."<sup>5</sup> In passive oral history the students make use of products of others' interviews, reading accounts, listening to tapes, and otherwise becoming aware of the contributions of oral history without actually experiencing the method first hand. Conversely, active oral history projects may involve students in all stages of an oral history program, especially in interviewing.

### **Selecting a Focus**

If the librarian/educator chooses to initiate an oral history project in an educational setting, the next step is to select, with the students, a focus for the project. Generally, oral history projects are thematic, centered on a theme such as an event, or biographical, centered on the personal and unique lives of individuals. There is much blurring between these two broad types of projects. For example, individuals who experienced an event such as a natural disaster are apt to discuss their experience in the context of their own life. However, without a clear, agreed upon central focus or purpose the oral history project may diverge into a number of unconnected avenues. This focus should be in the form of a written agreement on the mission of the project. Once the focus and mission are determined, then the librarian/educator can identify one or more objectives or statements with measurable outcomes that indicate whether or not the mission is achieved. Thus, if the mission is for students to document area veterans' involvement in war, one objective might be, by the end of three months, to have interviewed ten citizens who served in active duty over the past fifty years.

### **Initiating and Directing the Project**

Oral history manuals and publications provide ample advice on how to do oral history. Most oral history projects are headed by someone who serves as a director who handles coordination of effort and record keeping. Some of the important considerations include training students on the skills involved in conducting background research; formulating appropriate questions; handling equipment; conducting interviews; outlining, indexing, or transcribing completed interviews; and editing to prepare written documents or other products from the interviews. Training can include preparing packets of background material on oral history, developing model interviews, organizing workshops by experienced oral historians, purchasing training materials including video tapes, and instituting an ongoing evaluation process including peer review.

Important documents, such as legal release forms, will need to be drafted and approved. A file of potential interviewees will be developed, along with a name authority file to provide cross references between variant spellings, former names, and nicknames. Banks of interview questions should be kept. Evaluation forms need to be designed. Equipment will be purchased or borrowed and its use and maintenance scheduled. The director will handle the financial operation, including budgeting, accounting, and fund raising. The director will also handle the disposition of the interviews.

### **What Are the Products of Oral History?**

The primary result of the oral history effort is a document that contributes to the historic record. This contribution may flesh out the traditional historical chronology by providing the personal perspective of someone whose contributions or observations were heretofore undocumented. Such data would otherwise be lost with the observers' or participants' deaths.

Other oral history projects use the archival records to create unique products. Personal research based on oral history interviews leads to presentations and published articles and books. In Oakland, California, adult students in a literacy program were interviewed on their life histories; with the aid of a federal U. S. Department of Education grant, their stories were published in a four-volume set and these biographies were then used as texts in subsequent literacy classes.<sup>6</sup> Appalachian students in Eliot Wigginton's high school English classes published magazines, monographs, and curricular support materials and

produced recordings and programs for radio and television.<sup>7</sup> Community wide oral history projects are celebrated through exhibitions, advertised at festivals, recorded on film, or performed on stage.

### **Why Include Oral History in the Curriculum**

There are many advantages to incorporating oral history into the curriculum. In an experiment comparing high school students involved with oral history and those not using oral history methods in their required United States history class, Lanman found that oral history might contribute to greater understanding of content, especially when the project focuses on the students' ethnic background.<sup>8</sup> He also found that students had a positive attitude toward oral history, welcoming the change of pace oral history affords and motivating some students to continue in personal study of topics after the oral history unit was completed.<sup>9</sup> Using and practicing oral history in the classroom can enhance the educational experience through introducing new skills and augmenting other skills and knowledge.

### **Adaptability of the Approach**

Oral history is a versatile research tool that can be applied in any location or environment that allows at least two people to communicate with each other. Where there is memory and a means to document it, there can be oral history. Oral historians have interviewed a broad slice of human experience: American writers of the Vietnam war, nursing home residents, film directors, Soviet Jewish immigrants, concentration camp survivors, women of northern Ireland, drug addicts, children of Nazis, war brides of World War II, crime victims, black female domestic workers and their employers in segregated American southern states, patients in mental institutions, and people who claim to have seen Elvis since his death. Due to its multidisciplinary potential, oral history methods can be applied to any subject area within the curriculum.

### **Learning a Research Method**

In 1987 the Oral History Association's Committee on Teaching surveyed educators to assess their use of oral history. Results indicated that almost half of college and university teachers returning completed questionnaires (44% or 68 of 155 respondents) indicated that they incorporated oral history assignments in

order to teach their students a research method.<sup>10</sup> If a student develops an interest or aptitude in social science research, a student might contemplate careers that build on this learned skill, such as journalism, sociology and social work, history, and anthropology.

### **Enhancing Communication Skills**

Oral history can aid in the development of language arts. In fact, the aim of some oral history projects is not to produce a taped interview but to help students improve their reading and writing.<sup>11</sup> Students practice writing skills when they draft and write invitations to interviewees. They learn to describe themselves and their plans on paper. They analyze their oral speech through transcribing the interviews. In editing the transcriptions, students learn to edit their speech and writing.

They develop skills in asking written questions, following the type of training survey researchers use in their methodology. Thus, they must learn how to phrase questions that are to the point but not leading, polite yet direct, open ended rather than closed. Their oral skills are challenged as they learn to speak with another. Oral history helps students develop active listening skills: the interviewer listens to learn. Not only do they learn to listen to others for content, but students practice carrying a progressive conversation. In listening to themselves on tape they become aware of their tone, phrasing, and use of iteratives (such as basically, um, ah, you know, and don't you know) and lapses in speech.

### **Enhancing Organizational Skills**

Oral history requires that advanced planning and structure be tempered with flexibility. Organizational skills are needed to handle the myriad tasks required in record keeping and seeing a project through from start to finish. There is some structure to oral history but there is also ample room for the unexpected. The list of worries associated with oral history is a lengthy one. Tape recorders can malfunction; needed equipment can be forgotten the day of the interview; batteries can be exhausted. Background noise, panting or barking dogs, unhelpful relatives, electric appliances, traffic, or ringing telephones can minimize the production quality of an interview. Interviewees may be talkative until the recorder light is on. Interviewers may record over taped interviews; tapes may be erased during duplication or stored under improper conditions and subse-

quently damaged. Advance preparation can minimize some worries; training can assist a person in handling them. While dependent on team effort, oral history pushes self-reliance and often translates into character building.

### Promoting Socialization and Self Growth

The hallmark of oral history is the valuing of the individual. Popular culture and media such as music, television and film, promote the personality with the recognizable name and/or countenance; oral history permits the everyday person to speak.

Oral history may help reduce the isolation of modern life. Once involved in oral history, whether as interviewer or interviewee, the participants are no longer solitary. Engaging in oral history can serve as a rite of passage for a young person, an entering into the adult world where one becomes a peer and associate. He or she becomes part of the community of fellow oral historians, part of the community of human experience. This community includes the interviewees, librarians, archivists, and historians involved in the storage and dissemination of the content of the interviews, and the public or audience making use of the oral history interviews or products. Oral history has a great capacity for fostering intergenerational communication, contact between cultures, and cooperative learning. A student's sense of self worth may be enhanced when he or she contributes to a project of acknowledged importance.

By focusing on the interviewee's life and contributions, the interviewer engages in the other and cannot help but learn about himself or herself. In developing the introspective skills required to consider someone else's life, the student may begin to ponder his or her own future. He or she may learn to question and consider alternatives. Students may become aware of some valuable life lessons: that within one lifetime numerous experiences are possible. That others may adopt very different lifestyles from the student's own background and that these lifestyles can also be valued. A person can live his or her life on many levels: as a private, family focused individual; as a person involved in a profession; and as a person involved in the greater community. Oral history may afford the young person the wisdom of perspective.

### Conclusion

In summary, oral history has much to offer the curriculum. Through becoming involved

in oral history, an individual develops transferable abilities that can be applied throughout a lifetime. Eliot Wigginton, wrote of a core set of practices in teaching. In conversations with former high school students who had participated in his famed Foxfire project he described to...when these practices are used well, the result is often the most memorable, formative, intense, educative experience of [the students'] public school lives."<sup>12</sup>

### References

- 1 Thomas L. Charlton, *Oral History for Texans*, 2nd Ed. (Austin, Tex.: Texas Historical Commission, 1985): 2.
- 2 Barry A. Lanman, "Oral History as an Educational Tool for Teaching Immigration and Black History in American High Schools: Findings and Queries," *International Journal of Oral History* 8 (2) (1987): 122
- 3 Lorie Roy, "Planning an Oral History Project," *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries* 6 (4) (Summer 1993), 409-413. Lorie Roy, "The Oral History Project of TLA," *Texas Library Journal* 68 (2) (Summer 1992), 59-62.
- 4 *Guidelines and Principles of the Oral History Association*. Los Angeles, CA: Oral History Association, 1992.
- 5 Lanman, "Oral History as an Educational Tool," 123
- 6 "Literacy Students' Stories Become Text for Others," *Library Hotline* 21 (December 7, 1992): 5.
- 7 Eliot Wigginton, "Foxfire Grows Up," *Harvard Educational Review* 59 (1) (February 1989): 26.
- 8 Lanman, "Oral History as an Educational Tool," 129-130, 134.
- 10 Barry A. Lanman, "The Use of Oral History in the Classroom: A Comparative Analysis of the 1974 and 1987 Oral History Association Surveys," *Oral History Review* 17 (1) (Spring 1989): 217-218, 221.
- 11 James M. Deem and Sandra A. Engel, "Developing Literacy Through Transcription," *Journal of Basic Writing* 7 (2) (1988): 99-107.
- 12 Wigginton, "Foxfire Grows Up," p.30.



# Incorporating Oral History into the Curriculum: A Pathfinder

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Oral History is the recording and preserving of planned interviews with selected people able to narrate recollected memory and thereby aid the reconstruction of the past. Oral history can be used in the elementary and secondary school classroom as a way for students to capture the history and lives of people not recorded and become a part of preserving history and culture.

## Start with Background Information on Oral History

When searching the library catalog for general works on oral history use the term "oral history". Also, browse the call number D16 for Library of Congress or 907.2 for the Dewey Decimal system.

The following are titles on the theory and practice of oral history.

Baum, W.K. *Oral History for the Local History Society*, 3rd ed. Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1987.

Haulice, P. *Oral History: A Reference Guide and Annotated Bibliography*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1985.

Hoopes, J. *Oral History: An Introduction for Students*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979.

Thompson, P. *The Voice of the Past*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

## For Articles and Curriculum Guides on Oral History

In the following indexes you will find articles about oral history and curriculum models on the use of oral history in the classroom.

ERIC. Washington, DC: Educational Research Information Center, 1960-

*Using the words "oral history", to search, you will find many articles. By adding other terms such as "teaching methods", "multi-cultural", "curriculum development", "class activities" or any other area of interest, you will get more specific titles.*

KCDL (Krause Curriculum Development Library) *Cumulative Subject Index and Microfiche Collection*. White Plains, NY: Krause

International Publications, 1994.

*In the "Cumulative Subject Index" look under the "History/Geography" section for the key terms "oral history". Items listed will include a reference number to locate the document from the "Microfiche Collection".*

## Methods for Using Oral History in the Classroom

You can find books on this topic by looking in the library catalog using the term: "oral history--study and teaching". The following are bibliographies and general works.

Lanman, B.A. and G. Mehaffy. *Oral History in the Secondary School Classroom*. Los Angeles, CA: Oral History Association, 1988. ED 348 330.

Neuenschwander, J.A. *Oral History as A Teaching Approach*. Washington: National Education Association, 1976.

Pierce, P. *Oral History: An Effective Means to Enhance Education in the Elementary Classroom*. A paper presented at the Annual Convention of the New York State Council for Social Studies Ellenville, NY, 1984. ED 244 856.

Schipper, S.P. *Oral History: An Effective Means to Enhance Education in the Elementary Classroom*, 1982. ED 224 744.

Sitton, T, G. Mehaffy and O.L. Davis, Jr. *Oral History: A Guide for Teachers (and Others)*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1983.

## Examples of Oral History in the Classroom

These are some examples of the ways that oral history has and can be used successfully in the curriculum.

Fernekes, W.R. "Student Inquiries about the Vietnam War." *Social Education* 52, 1 (January 1988): 53-54.

Totten, S. "Using Oral Histories to Address Social Issues in the Social Studies Classroom." *Social Education*, 53, 2 (February 1989): 114-116.

Wigginton, E. ed., ed. *The Foxfire Book*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1972.



*This is the first of a series. Wigginton began an oral history program in the 1960s. It was so successful that it has become a model called the "Foxfire Method".*

#### **Associations**

Associations can put you in touch with local oral history experts and practitioners. You may also want to ask for a list of publications, especially their "Guidelines".

#### **Oral History Association**

Box 13734, N.T. Station  
North Texas State University  
Denton, TX 76203

# Literacy and the Inner City Child

by  
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The focus of this presentation is literacy and service to the inner city child. I believe that there is a need to target these children. The vision of an inner city child is one of living in less than desirable circumstances, more than likely at or below the poverty level, and there is a good chance that they are one of the minority groups in a country. In the United States "almost three-quarters of the nation's poor resided in urban areas in 1985. The proportion of the low-income people living in extremely poor neighborhoods increased between 1970 and 1980, from 16 percent to 24 percent. The concentrated poor are mainly in a few of the largest cities." (U.S. House, 1991). We can predict that the children we will be serving throughout the remainder of this decade are the offspring of the children who lived in extremely poor neighborhoods in the 1970s and 1980s.

There is no desire to remain in the inner city or major population area. The inner city is old, crowded and not a very pleasant place to grow up. Those families that remain in the inner city are there either because they have no choice (mandatory residency for certain jobs), economics (either close to work, school, family) or lack of resources (can't find enough money to move and live outside the inner city). There are some exceptions. "Millions of children grow up in illiterate households. They do not receive the support they need to excel in school, which results in their starting off far behind their peers." (Hatkoff, 1992). Although the school system they attend offers the best instruction possible, there usually is a need to place more emphasis on the social needs. According to Project Literacy, U.S., children with low basic skills are nine times more likely to drop out of high school, eight times more likely to become pregnant out of wedlock, and four times more likely to become welfare-dependent than children with above-average skills. These children come to school with a greater abundance of social needs than children from the non-urban, suburban or rural population. Generally there

are not enough assets to adequately provide for all the needs of these children. "Without basic skills a child's chances for future independence, productivity and success are greatly limited." (Hatkoff, 1992). The families remaining are raising their children as best as they can. The inner city is usually not represented in the children's books we have in the collection. Although there has been some new titles depicting the inner city child and a way of life that may be familiar to them, the titles are not in abundance. Our role as school librarians will continue to expand in an effort to provide the specialized assistance necessary to serve these students.

The children are the future of the community. What they are and will become is a reflection of how they developed. Think of the children as the seeds of a growing crop. If you sow the seeds in fertile soil, provide nutrients, water, light and heat, the seed will grow into a productive crop, and produce more seeds to sustain itself. Lacking any of the necessary ingredients the crop will fail or produce a less than desirable product or yield.

If we view schools as growing fields and all teachers as growers then we can see that some of the crops grow very well, while others barely survive and some wither and die in the ground. The school library media specialist can be the master grower. The expert in crop development. A master grower is able to diagnose the crop and recommend the remedial action or ingredient to correct a deficiency. We are the fruits of good growing practices. Just think back to your earlier growing years. Whether we had the best of all the ingredients or were saved by a caring grower and provided with better soil, nutrients, more water, moved to a brighter location or given some heat. We all developed well. The children of the inner city are not being provided with all the necessary ingredients in the proper amounts to produce well. Some are lacking the light, some the water and some are trying to survive (not grow) in very poor soil. School librarians must

understand how children learn to read, then they can provide the proper instruction. Lea-Ruth Wilkens said in her book *Supporting K-5 Reading Instruction in the School Library Media Center*, "Only if school library media specialists have a sound understanding of the reading instruction process will they be able to guide readers on how to use the wealth of printed materials available to them in the school library media center." (Wilkens, 1984). There are a variety of sources to learn how children read. *The Power of Reading*, by Stephen Kashen offers the research background of various studies to confirm the fact that continuous reading induces better readers, writers and thinkers. Now is the time to provide that healthy start or remedial action to produce the best and strongest crop that can be produced.

Another significant factor in the literacy development of children is modeling behaviors. "Modeling has the most profound effect on learning. We are all modified models of our environment." (Wilkens, 1984). The history of mankind confirms this. Who is your heroine or hero? Picking a famous person and following their footsteps is a method we have pursued at sometime or another. Start with answering the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up? Think back to when you were first asked that question. I'll bet you named an occupation or profession and had a famous person in mind that you wanted to be like. Some of us picked a parent or older family member, others may have selected a famous entertainer or film star, sports figure or social leader. And as we grow older we may have had changed our attitude toward that person or the profession. "Your beliefs, behavior and manner reflect your development. If your developmental environment was rich then you acquired skills faster and they were reinforced into a stronger foundation upon which all others issues, skills and attitudes rest." (Wilkens, 1984).

Emotional and social problems manifest in the actions of the children in a variety of ways. "Some children may suffer from emotional problems because they are neglected and abused or live in home environments which do not provide a feeling of being loved and nurtured. Negative attitude toward reading may develop in children who come from home environments in which reading is neither nurtured nor reinforced by a positive regard for the learner or the teacher or it may also occur in homes where reading is highly valued but not com-

municated to children by adults (role models) who unthinkingly take it for granted that children recognize the importance of reading. The attitude of the classroom teacher also contributes to positive or negative influences regarding reading." (Wilkens, 1984). We need not only be aware of the social and emotional problems that face our inner city youth, but we must have a variety of solutions to help them deal with the issues. I think that we cannot solve these problems alone. However, we must be a part of the solution. Understanding the issues and affects on the children will help us design an adequate approach to the children.

We must be desirable models for the students to follow. A potted plant will grow toward a light source, it will bend. The bending will affect the development and shape of the plant. With daily rotation a potted plant can develop into a straight, tall and healthy specimen, without rotation it may be strong but slanted. Children, like growing plants, need the daily attention of the grower to develop into well-rounded, knowledgeable citizens of the community. The school library media specialist (Master Grower) and the teachers (growers) can provide this daily rotation in the form of new information of varied subjects, introduction to alternate sources of information, and reading for growth. We need to recognize not only the inadequately growing crops, but maintain the nourishment of the entire field or garden. We know as gardeners that what works for one group or crop or type of plant does not work for all group. As the growers know some crops need more light, others need additional water, or perhaps the soil is lacking the required chemical consistency and needs fortified with additional nutrients. Different groups need different ingredients. However, all the crops need attention, your attention.

I think we can all agree that reading literacy is a master key to success. What are some methods or techniques you can incorporate into your program of service to the children? Understand the students' backgrounds. The inner city may not be your background, but you need to get into it to understand it. What is the heritage, customs and traditions of the students being served. You must attempt to get to know what the students deem important and develop an approach from that information. Try not to force your views of life, learning and living onto your students. We learn from what we know to what we don't know. You need to establish what the children know in terms of what they

have experienced, how they live and how they view their world. Only then can you build a bridge from their limited experiences to the greater world of society's experiences. What is important to the children may be insignificant to you. However, the only way you can reach them is by placing a value on their comments, ideas, and issues.

Establish a fertile ground for the seed to grow. Present the children with a comfortable place to listen and read. A school library that is warm and inviting is a start. It can be a haven especially for children who don't have a place of their own to read in.

Feed the children stories that they like. Feed them by reading to them. Introduce stories that are short and funny. Capture their imagination with stories that may be familiar to them. Studies show the importance of children being read to at an early age in terms of developing reading and language skills. Yet many young parents lack the precedent of story time. Therefore, a tradition of reading and the importance of developing a lifelong learning habit of reading is not developed or ingrained into the memory and lives of the children. Offer to lead a group of parents in reading to their children. Set this up through a literacy group, or as a school library to host an after school program. You may be able to get assistance from local community groups that advocate helping others in the community.

Water the new plants. Encourage them to read anything and set up a routine for the children to tell their fellow students what they read about. I would suggest that you limit the amount of formal structure in this process. Too many rules or procedures, like too much water, can drown the imagination and creativity of anyone.

Provide the nutrients on a routine basis. Present the children with a variety of literature, rhymes, poems, folk stories, and ballads, and longer stories of children experiencing unfamiliar places and things. Develop displays of inquisitive things for children to experience and explore.

Oral reading appears to be similar to the tradition of story telling in ancient cultures. Before the printing press and mass quantities of textbooks and readers, our ancestors passed down the body of knowledge through oral tradition. The folk tales of every culture were handed down by word of mouth for centuries. "It is important to read to young children in order to acquaint them with the patterns of the

literary or printed language." (Hillerich, 1977). That is probably why folk tales were among the first types of literature to be printed.

Once you have picked a book appropriate to the interests of the group's age, both mental and physical, the book or story ought to be read without paraphrasing. There is no harm for children to hear a word or two that might not be in their listening vocabulary. Again that is how people, children and adults, learn; experiencing new words, ideas and concepts. "Oral reading should be done from a book that others do not have in hand." (Hillerich, 1977). Practice, practice, practice! Make up particular voices for each character. These voices should be as colorful as the costumes of a theater production. Children also need to play a part, their part in the oral reading process. They can share by reading to the rest of the group a small portion of a book or story they enjoy. "They may dramatize a story by the taking of parts of the characters and reading their parts directly from the book." (Hillerich, 1977). The other purpose for reading to children is to increase their interest in reading. Do you remember an interesting oral introduction to a book that made you want to read that book?

Another approach is to incorporate reading into the subject matter. You have heard of literature across the curriculum? David Moore, writing in *Developing Readers and Writers*, develops the concept that "literacy and subject matter instruction can be combined in elementary as well as secondary schools. This distinction is especially valuable because more and more elementary teachers are incorporating literacy instruction with instruction about the world." (Moore, 1994). He offers the following reasons for incorporating literacy instruction with subject matter:

1. Reading and writing are tools for learning.
2. Literacy requirements continually increase in school and society.
3. Each mode of expression requires distinct language abilities.
4. Each content area requires distinct learning abilities.
5. Readers and writers perform a variety of tasks that require distinct language abilities.
6. Content area teachers can teach content area reading and writing best.

Because content area sources and courses consist largely of language, the study of

content areas is really the study of language. We now understand more than ever before that the literacy requirements are increasing significantly as students move from elementary to secondary school. This is reflected in society as we evolve from an industrial-based to a technical/informational one (Cole, 1990; Resnick, 1987). The amount of sophisticated reading and writing abilities required of graduates is rapidly increasing as a result of the technical/informational deluge. The revolutionary changes in technology have affected nearly all occupations. Office workers of our parents generation were skilled in using manual typewriters, filing cabinets and single line telephones. Today's office workers need to be able to use word processing programs, computerized databases and multiline telephone systems, fax machines and electronic mail functions. "Jobs that call for predictable, simple routines are giving way to work that requires complex problem solving and decision making skills." (Moore, 1994). In order to develop these skills children must be able to read and write well. Literacy started at an early age can instill the tradition of reading and learning on ones own to become a productive member of the community and break the pattern of poverty that is burdening today's society. "Without basic skills a child's chances for future independence, productivity and success are greatly limited." (Hatkoff, 1992).

The major difference I have seen from working in an inner city school is the environment and cultural background of the children. We were not the same. Yet I tried to develop a sense of understanding their culture in order to show them reading literacy and reading tradition.

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# Looking at Britain's National Curriculum for English: Promoting Long Established Children's Fiction and Stories from a Variety of Cultures and Traditions

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No matter what one's family origins may be, most Americans grow up with a landscape of England imprinted on the mind. Through nursery rhyme, we did "Ride a Cock Horse to Banbury Cross," and other places. We worried about London Bridge falling down. As we grew older, through books, movies, or television, we became familiar with Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens; Christopher Robin watching the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace; Mary Poppins strict rules of decorum on Cherry Tree Lane; tea parties with Alice in Wonderland. Fantasy and make believe seemed much more plausible in England. Toad drove a motor car, and messed around with boats along with his old friend Badger, and it all made perfect sense. The great outdoors of woods, fields and moors are magnificent gateways to worlds of fantasy.

England has a rich literary heritage to bequeath to the world, but, as I discovered during my sabbatical year in England, life is not like that. The reality is that most people in Great Britain live in large cities, in apartments, semi-detached houses (duplexes), and small houses. Less than ten per cent of the nations' children attend fee-paying schools, and of that, fewer than two per cent are in boarding schools. Most attend state supported schools in their neighborhoods and live at home with their parents, without servants. Modern England is a multicultural society with people living throughout the country from Pakistan, India, the West Indies, Hong Kong, Kenya, and Nigeria. There are racial conflicts for these immigrant families in Great Britain, and some of the modern stories reflect this fact. There is a strong love of nature reflected in many stories, but modern children search the great outdoors in public places, not on their own wooded estates. City bound children rarely get to a landscaped park.

In 1989 England implemented the National Curriculum for state schools, making prescriptive demands on teaching content and

approach. Although there seems to be a consensus for the idea of having a national curriculum, there has been a lot of controversy over details. In this study, a review of the controversies on the National Curriculum will be presented, along with examples of books promoted for student reading which reflect long established children's fiction and stories from a variety of cultures and traditions. Library holdings were checked, observations made, and school staff interviewed at two schools in Guildford, Surrey. The problems described at each school are typical for schools in Great Britain -- all trying to meet the demands of the National Curriculum, school finances, and classroom and student needs at the same time. The recommended reading list for English reflects the conflicting points of view of the traditionalists and progressives in educational thought.

## Background Information on the National Curriculum.

The passing of the 1988 Education Reform Act changed the power bases and political assumptions of state schooling in Great Britain. Proponents said that the Act would raise standards, extend choice, and produce a better educated Britain. Critics said that the Act has eliminated concerns for equality of opportunity or a comprehensive system of state education. Parental choice and competition, close financial monitoring and strong central control are its traits. According to Flude and Hammer (1990) the changes were brought about by the New Right after the Conservative government took power in 1979. The curriculum was not changed immediately, but financial restraints on schools due to the economy followed the Conservative party line.

Controversies regarding the National Curriculum are based on the weighting of testing and assessment schemes, and on educational philosophies. The consensus for the adoption of a National Curriculum is strong. The classroom revolution of the 1960s had its

backlash in 1976 in a speech given by James Callaghan, then Prime Minister at Ruskin College in Oxford. The politicians, and much of the public felt that schools were failing the needs of pupils, with too much play and child centered learning. Students were not being educated for the needs of the work force. Schools were encouraged to become more cost efficient and all should teach a relevant curriculum. Duncan Graham 1991), former head of the National Curriculum Council, summarizing the impact of Callaghan's speech, concurred that "there was a need for a National Curriculum and...a surprising consensus on content. "Even a letter to the editor in the *Times Educational Supplement* (TES) affirms this. "The introduction of the National Curriculum has encouraged many positive effects: an appraisal of the whole curriculum, consideration of teaching methods, differentiated schemes of work, reflection on all types of assessment aimed at improving learning, and better reporting of information to pupils, and parents." (TES April 30, 1993)

The National Curriculum is taught to all students ages 5 to 16. It covers three core foundation subjects: English, mathematics and science; and seven other foundation subjects-technology, history, geography, music, art, physical education, plus a modern foreign language for ages 11 to 16. Religious Education is required, but is not subject to attainment targets or standardized tests as the others are. Within the core and foundation subjects, cross curricular themes are included, in areas such as health education, environmental education, careers education, and education for good citizenship. Library and information skills are woven into the National Curriculum through subject strands-primarily through English and Technology (information technology) subjects. National standardized tests are given at four Key Stages:

Key Stage 1, at age 7 is said to be diagnostic only;

Key Stage 2, age 11;

Key Stage 3, age 14;

Key Stage 4, age 16, students take the GCSE - General Certificate of Secondary Education Exams, in 4 or 5 subjects. Good performance on this exam is needed for the next level. Students may leave school and start work after this. Because of the economy, many more continue and take A level exams, which are required for University admission. Students concentrate on three subjects in depth, and can take other short courses. Students can also choose further

education with vocational training, or general studies. In 1991, 62% of 16 year-olds chose to continue full time study, and another 2% chose part time study. Secondary schools give the older students free time in the middle of the day for working on projects, and these students help with supervision duties at school.

The National Curriculum has assessment and attainment targets for all required subjects. English in the National Curriculum has specific activities required for each subject. Students should be able to:

**Level 1**--Talk in simple terms about the content of stories, or information in nonfiction books.

**Level 2**--Read a range of material with some independence, with fluency, accuracy, and understanding.

**Level 3**--Devise a clear set of questions that will enable them to select and use appropriate information sources and reference books from the class and school library.

**Level 4**--Find books or magazines in the class or school library by using a classification system, catalogue, or database and use appropriate methods of finding information, when pursuing a line of inquiry.

**Level 5**--Select reference books and other information materials and use organizational devices to find answers to their own questions and those of others.

**Levels 6 & 7**--Read a range of fiction and poetry, explaining their preferences.

**Level 7**--Select, retrieve and combine information independently from a wide range of reference materials.

**Levels 8, 9 & 10**--Read a range of fiction, poetry literary nonfiction and drama, including pre-20th century literature. Select, retrieve, evaluate and combine information independently and with discrimination, from a comprehensive range of reference materials.

DES. "Attainment Target 2: Reading." *English in the National Curriculum*, 1990.

Under this system, children will all be exposed to the same literary heritage which England has to offer the whole English speaking world. The truth is, many children cannot relate to the middle class Victorian sensibilities of the old favorites. Books which reflect the current conditions of modern times are added to the recommended lists. There has been a great deal of controversy on all of this, and that is part of the sport of observing the implementation of the National Curriculum.

## **Background Information on the National Curriculum:**

Callaghan's Ruskin speech of 1976 is seen as a turning point in shifting public opinion. Early success in privatization policies in the sale of Council Houses (housing projects) and for some industries, made the social climate open to the Conservatives' reforms in education. Calls for school choice, and account-ability fit in to the ethos of the school reform movement. One new concept is the local management of schools, which covers financial delegation and obligations. Local decisions are made on school expenditures - for supplies, maintenance, staffing, etc. Formula funding is a pupil driven system of funding schools in which at least 75% of the money allocated by formula must be tied to a pupil, so that schools have a clear incentive to attract and retain its pupils. Thus, a popular school receives more money on the basis of the higher number of students attending it. Schools with declining enrollment, whatever the reason, will have to manage within these constraints. This financial arrangement causes short term problems in staffing and in buying resources for the school. A sudden influx of students adds more money for short term needs, and can make the school more attractive in a competitive school market. On the other hand, more students puts more demands on a school, and overcrowded classrooms are not attractive.

The National Curriculum has faced frequent revisions and updates. Four were introduced between 1989 to 1993, with a major change planned for the 1993-1994 school year. Testing and assessment is at the heart of the changes - in order to provide a comparison of the performance of schools at all levels. The National Curriculum for English has become the most politicized, by the right wing Centre for Policy Studies, producing a curriculum which "looks back to the past, not forward to the future," according to an editor of *Times Educational Supplement*. (St. John-Brooks, 1993) When the 1994 revision is introduced, there will be a five-year moratorium on changes, giving English teachers some stability, after years of wrangling. (TES, March 11, 1994, p.1)

## **Looking at the National Curriculum for English: Promoting Literature.**

In the classroom, students are exposed to a variety of literature each year. The National Curriculum suggests certain titles for each school year. Every class covers a certain

number of books, and student's performance is based on tests given on those particular stories. Students are encouraged to read widely, so other books are welcome, but the assessments must cover reading ability and comprehension.

The list of reading books in *English in the National Curriculum* is provided in order to standardize the assessment process. This is a sample of the good books to be found in classrooms and libraries, selected so that the results of the assessments are consistent across the country.

In the National Curriculum, Attainment Target 2, reading is defined as "the ability to read, understand and respond to a wide range of literary and non-literary texts." It goes on to say that pupils should be encouraged to develop a habit of reading for pleasure. The subject strands within the reading requirement include initial reading skills, comprehension, response to literature and information handling, (using library skills).

In the teacher's guide each level includes a list of the type of literature children should read. Titles listed in *A Reading List for the Nation's Children* are advisory. In reality the national exams at Key Stages, especially KS 2, KS 3 and KS 4 assume that students are familiar with specific titles, authors and literary styles. The reliance on exams to raise educational standards is part of the controversy over English in the National Curriculum. Traditionalists favor concentrating on the best of British authors, while others promote a multi-cultural point of view, and others prefer a child centered or whole language approach to reading and literature. In many parts of England multi-racial and immigrant communities are the predominant culture. The recommended titles include enough variety to reflect Asian Indian and Afro-Caribbean cultures, but not enough to please all sides.

Reading for Level 1 and Level 2 includes British and American titles. Teachers may use any book the children are enthusiastic about, and with which they are familiar. The recommended titles are selected, so that the assessment process is standardized.

Level 1 and Level 2 include the following titles: Level 1: *Each Peach Pear Plum*, Ahlberg; *Ten Nine Eight, Bang*, Mr. Gumpy's Outing, Burningham; *Dear Zoo*, Campbell; *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, Carle; *One Inch Rajah*, Front; *The Bears who Went to the Seaside*, Gretz; *The Baked Bean Queen*, Impey; *Titch*, Hutchins; *Is Anyone Home*, Maris; *Brown Bear*,

*Brown Bear, What Do You See?*, Martin; *Not Now Bernard*, McKee; *On Friday, Something Happened*, Prater; *How Do I Put It On?*, Watanabe. Level 2: *Andrew's Bath*, McPhail; *All in One Piece*, Murphy; *But Martin!*, Counsel; *The Bad Tempered Ladybird*, Carle; *Frog and Toad are Friends*, Lobel; *Eat Up, Gemma*, Hayes; *Ormerod*, Dogger; *Hughes*, Peepo!; *Ahlberg*; *Threadbear*, Inkpen; *Through My Window*, Bradman, Brown; *Whatever Next!*, Murphy; *It was Jake!*, Jeram; *Jamaica's Find*, Havill; *Miss Dose the Doctor's Daughter*, Mr. and Mrs. Hay the Horse, Mrs. Wobble the Waitress, Ahlberg; *New Clothes for Alex*, Dickinson.

Level 3: *A Necklace of Raindrops*, Aiken; *Old Bear*, Hissey; *Osa's Pride*, Grifalconi; *Shaker Lane*, Provenson; *The Bunk Bed Bus*, Rodgers; *Tall Inside*, Richardson; *the Turtle and the Island*, Wilson; *What's the Time* Rory Wolf, McClure.

Level 4: *I'm Trying to Tell You*, Ashley; *Lady Daisy*, King-Smith; *Alice in Wonderland*, Carroll; *A Bear Called Paddington*, Bond; *Charlotte's Web*, White; *The Man Who Wanted to Live Forever*, Hastings; *West Indian Folk Tales*, Sherlock; *Winnie the Pooh*, Milne; *Seasons of Splendor: Tales from India*, Jaffrey, Carbonel, Sleigh; *Here Comes Charlie Moon*, Hughes; *The Downhill Crocodile Shizz*, Mahy; *Dear Mili*, Grimm; *The Good Little Christmas Tree*, Williams, Tyler; *Across the Barricades*, Lingard; *Treasure Island*, Stevenson; *Dragon Slayer: Beowulf*, Sutcliff; *Just So Stories*, Kipling.

After Key Stage 2 exams at age 11, the student's school day is arranged by subject classes, like American middle school or junior high. The English classes include literature, writing, grammar. Recommended reading is covered in class, and choices for student's reading becomes broader. Students begin to study one Shakespeare play per year. At the end of this stage, the Key Stage 3 exam includes a choice of questions from specific stories read. In the bad old days, it was a fill in the blank of who said what to whom. Modern tests are supposed to be better designed, but teachers even in conservative Guildford boycotted the national tests for 14-year-olds in 1993 and 1994, because of their unfairness and lack of consistency with what the National Curriculum required them to teach.

The exams for 16 year-olds at Key Stage 4 or GCSE exams drive the course work for students ages 14 to 16. Oral and written coursework is included as well as terminal exam papers. Students are assessed on a diverse

range of texts which include poetry, prose and drama. Paper One, Part A is an open study of comparative work on texts. Students research a selection of texts, reflecting individual interests, and including sufficient scope to draw comparisons and connections. Texts studied by the class as a whole can be included, but must also include books, drama or poetry read on one's own. Teacher input can be very strong at this point, and unless a student has other resources, the student is limited to the books the school has to offer. Part B of Paper One is the Shakespeare Unit, based on works studied in class. Activities can include a comparison of a number of different versions of the same play--film, video, performance. Another choice could be a comparison of a Shakespeare play with a text with related themes--such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Love Across the Barricades*. A student could write a comparison of two Shakespeare plays. Paper Two in the Key Stage 4 assessment would be a written exam on a student's understanding and response to poetry. Students must have read a wide range of poems from a range of times and cultures. Students and teachers are not informed ahead of time which poet(s) will be part of the exam. For Paper Three in the assessment a student may choose one of two options, which will be changed every three years. A number of specific texts will be specified for each option, additional reading is not specified. Example One **Writers and Their Cultures: American Women Writers** includes reading the books *The Friends*, by Rosa Guy; *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry*, by Mildred Taylor; and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee. Related reading would include books by Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, Carson McCullers, Toni Morrison, etc. Example Two: **Thematic Study: The Individual and Society**. Required reading would include *Great Expectations*, by Charles Dickens; *A View from the Bridge*, by Arthur Miller; *Sumitra's Song*, by Rukshana Smith. Other authors could include George Orwell, H.G. Wells, etc.

At Level 1, the teacher may use any book that the children are enthusiastic about and with which they are familiar. They should be given a choice from a selection of high quality books they have had the opportunity to look at and to hear read aloud. The list is for suggestions only.

At Level 2 Shirley Hughes' book, *Dogger* (*David and Dog*) the curriculum guide specifies that students should to read out loud pages 6 and 7 for their reading record. The child is also



asked to give a summary of the story. Children have to cover *two* of the suggested main points of the story to give evidence of having read the book. The curriculum guide presents four to six main points for each story. Teachers are free to choose their own titles, but the easiest path is to choose the standard titles, and follow the standard assessments.

At Level 3, each suggested title is followed by an indication of the points children need to cover in order to demonstrate understanding of the main points of the story, and "understanding beyond the literal." For example, with *Shaker Lane*, by Alice Provenson, students should make some of the main points about the old and new inhabitants and how they lived. The dam is built, and people move out. For "understanding beyond the literal," students could mention the historical events in the story; explain how the Herkimer sisters felt when selling the land; or discuss the motives of dam builders, and what the people felt about the dam.

Level 4 stories include a wide range of content, but are similar in reading level. A book should be chosen which reflects the child's interest and experience. Children are to read the stories silently; and then discuss the main points of the story, and points covered in assessing the children's understanding of the literal. The book *I'm Trying to Tell You*, by Bernard Ashley has a multicultural, moral message. Other stories in this group include *Alice in Wonderland*, *A Bear Called Paddington*, and *Charlotte's Web*. The story *I'm Trying to Tell You*, features the chapter "Lenny's Red Letter Day." The story reflects some of the social turmoil in modern England.

#### Main Points:

Prakesh befriends a classmate, Lenny Fraser, who has no friends, and comes from a difficult home. Lenny does not come to school very much, but when he arrives on the day of his birthday, he is embarrassed because he has no cards to show the class and no presents to talk about. Prakesh invites him home for tea. They play Monopoly, have crisps and pop, and Prakesh gives Lenny a birthday card from the family shop. When Lenny has left, it is noticed that a postal order (check) has gone missing and Prakesh and his family immediately think that Lenny has stolen it. Prakesh goes to

Lenny's house to confront him but when he gets there he is so shocked by the treatment that Lenny receives from his mother that he finds himself unable to accuse Lenny. This is just as well, because the postal order is found with the Monopoly money.

#### Understanding beyond the Literal:

Students and teacher should discuss some of the following points: Why Lenny does not come to school very much. Why he has no friends. What does Lenny feel about school. What the other children feel about Lenny. What Prakesh usually felt about Lenny. Why he invites Lenny home for tea. The reasons for the reactions of Prakesh and his family upon realizing that the postal order is missing. Prakesh's feelings upon seeing Lenny's home and the treatment he receives from his mother.

The emphasis on reading, and reporting on what students read will definitely affect school budgets and the publishing and media industry. In the year I spent in England, I noticed that many titles from the recommended reading lists appeared as special programs on after school television: for example, *The Borrowers*, by Mary Norton, *Village by the Sea*, by Anita Desai, *The Railway Children*, by E. Nesbit and others. I like to think they were chosen because of their literary merit, and that the story was easily transferable to television. The titles publishers make available, and the resources which textbook publishers offer for sale, will try to match the National Curriculum. A poetry anthology, *Dragon's Book of Verse*, matches the recommended poetry list. Book publishers and bookshops offer reading sections for children, featuring titles recommended by the National Curriculum. Mums are encouraged to buy books and study helps for all ages.

According to a 1992 survey by The Book Trust, more and more schools rely on parents and friends associations to raise money for class and library books. Schools spend three times as much on photocopying paper than as they do on books. The average primary school spent between 1,000 and 2,000 pounds on class and library books in 1991-92. One school only spent 9 pounds, another spent 6,396 pounds. Junior



schools spent 250 pounds to 15,000 pounds. In secondary schools, the average spent in 1991-92 was between 13,000 pounds to 19,000 pounds. The highest was 100,000 pounds, the lowest 1,172 pounds. Spending per pupil averaged 7 pounds to 18 pounds for primary schools and 16 pounds to 23 pounds for secondary schools. (*TES* Oct. 9, 1992, p.8)

Changes and shifts in school funding, added demands for education of students with special needs, and changes in school organization change the publishers outlook on who buys their books. School library services are not always run by a central school district in many cases. The centralized curriculum does allow for predictability in what material is needed and required. Individual schools face choices in which areas of a subject to emphasize. Funding priorities vary from school to school and region to region. The demands of the National Curriculum are always higher than the amount of money spent.

The National Curriculum is a political football. Everyone from the man in the street to members of Parliament have their opinions on which books are important to read, and what children should know. The problem is that some members of Parliament have insisted on traditional favorites, without thinking of students' abilities or interests. The new reading list for age 14 has some modern improvements, such as the unit on American women writers, for Years 10 and 11. As one commentator put it, "They even recognize that some writers are women, and that writing can deal with teenage topics rather than post imperial nostalgia." (*TES*, Jan 28 1994, p.2) The list was not changed for most age groups, and remains very traditional.

In the school libraries I observed in Guildford, funding for library resources was augmented by gifts from the Parent's Associations. In a comfortable suburb such as Guildford, the amount of money is a matter of degree. In less affluent areas, extra funding from parents is out of the question. Since funding is tied to the number of students at a school, schools need to spend their money on brochures, video programs and other public relations materials to show the school off at its best, and gain more students. Problems arise when marketing the schools takes precedence over teaching. What kind of ethics are children being taught, if a student's value to the school is based on the amount of money he brings in to the school? Some of the money spent on public relations would buy

books and equipment, and perhaps additional staff.

In the autumn of 1992, League Tables of performance on the national tests for A-Levels and GCSEs were published for all schools. This allows parents to choose a school on the basis of its performance. The school is accountable for the quality of the education the children receive. Although there is no reason to keep the performance levels of students on national tests a secret, the test scores reflect more than the school's ability to teach the National Curriculum. Critics point out that the League Tables do not take into account the ability of students before they enrolled in a particular school. By emphasizing a school's worth on performance on one test, schools are encouraged to select students who are likely to do well.

The League Tables reflect well on Guildford. Schools considered for observation have over 90% of their students taking the A Level exams. School A has a score of 16.3 in 1992 and 15.4 in 1993 for the A-Levels. For the GCSE exams, 95% of the students passed 5 exams in both years. School B has a score of 13.4 in 1992 and 13.8 in 1993 for A levels, and an 84% pass rate for 5 exams in 1992 and an 88% pass rate in 1993. Another school has 17.5 A level score and a 95% pass rate for 5 GCSE exams in 1992. The school libraries in Guildford are adequate but underfunded, and students still had good test scores. For the sake of school libraries, no conclusions should be drawn from this tiny sample.

The school marketplace is not geared to the student with special needs, or troubled families, unable to help children at home. Is the low performance on tests always the teacher's fault? Schools can face declining enrollments, teachers can lose their jobs because students did not do well. What happens to the students at the failing schools with declining enrollments? How far does a school have to decline before it is closed? What happens to the overcrowded popular school when it runs out of space? These market forces have started, and schools do not know where they will end.

Recent newspaper articles (*TES*, May 17, 1993) have indicated that test scores are not the only criterion parents value in selecting a school. Parents consider the school's proximity, whether or not the child's friends or siblings attend, and general school atmosphere. The enthusiasm of teachers and other students

at the school, the absence of vandalism on the school grounds, and the general reputation of the school are other popular considerations. Given the generally good standing on the League Tables, Guildford parents use other general criteria in selecting a secondary school for their children.

### **National Curriculum and Library Information Skills:**

As early as Key Stage 2 (ages 7 to 12) in the National Curriculum for English, "School and class libraries must provide as wide a range as possible of fiction, nonfiction and poetry, as well as periodicals suitable for children of this age." As part of their reading skills, students are asked to learn how to find information in books and databases, sometimes drawing on more than one source, and asked to pursue an independent line of inquiry. These skills must be taught and evaluated by the subject teacher. The curriculum guidelines assume there are adequate resources to enable students to do these tasks.

The National Curriculum in several subjects frequently refer to the finding and using of information from a wide range of different sources, but the teaching of the skills needed to be able to find and use information is not specified. Use of particular reference tools is required by the English curriculum, but there is no requirement to teach the skills needed to use them.

At a technology oriented secondary school, the English faculty did not have time to include all the library skills in the time allotted for their subject. The teaching plan is spread out through several subject areas. PE class covers the introduction to library skills; English--alphabetical order; mathematics--number order; modern foreign languages--dictionaries; science--encyclopedias; geography--atlases. Subject teachers bring year 7 and year 8 students to the library once each term for a hands on and worksheet session. It helps with transfer of skills involving a whole range of areas. (Small, 1993)

Before 1981, librarians used the term "user education" in their work in educating people to use the library. Some libraries offered classes on how to use the library, or part of a special course on how to study. Experience has shown that these methods were not particularly effective. (Heeks, 1983) Students would not pay attention because they did not feel that the information presented to them was relevant.

When library work was attached to specific assignments, students were able to use the new skills immediately.

Both schools I observed in Guildford had reference book based assignments which acquainted the students with books used in history, geography, and religious education. One group of students asked to see reference books only, as if they were not allowed to use a book from the main part of the collection. With their literal minded interpretation of the assignment, they fulfilled the "controlled conditions" limit to an assignment, which worried the members of NCATE. Too bad these students were not doing an English assignment.

Information technology is a strand in the National Curriculum; it is not a subject that stands on its own. Time for IT is carved out of given time slots for English and Science. The students are given lessons on using the computer for word processing skills and spread sheet skills. Some of their time is used trying out CD-ROM databases. In one school, the use of the CD-ROM databases is tied to an English assignment. As these resources increase, the limitation to the subject of English will be less important.

"User Education" became "Information Skills" during the 1980s; a time when the use of computers revolutionized the workplace, and the world of learning. As libraries became automated in the 1980s, the respect for information skills expanded to include the library world. The practical applications of computers were available for students to use in assignments, and the world of computers was seen as relevant to the world of work and technology. Both schools I observed have an assignment for Information Technology which requires students to use the CD-ROM databases in completing their assignment. Students submit a print out of the article they looked up.

The National Curriculum weaves the Library and Information skills through school subjects. These skills do not stand on their own. The Attainment Targets for Key Stages 1--4, and the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) requires the use of a wide range of resources and technology. The library is the natural source for books, media, and technology. This learning resource for students is not always used, and is chronically underfunded. (Heeks, 1983)

School libraries have a new impetus for improvement due to the demands of the National Curriculum. In 1984 a government

report described libraries as underused and underfunded. The current trend of local management of schools places libraries as more than repositories of background material. The specific needs of the curriculum have to be met. Peggy Heeks, the author of the 1984 government report, described successful school library programs as having the following characteristics:

- \*They furthered school aims, serve as the liaison for cross curricular work, information technology skills and flexible learning programs.

- \*They collaborated on curriculum delivery. In Heeks's survey libraries became busier with visits reaching 500 per day in one school.

- \*Factors contributing to success include the following: The support of school management, giving the librarian direct link to senior management, and a clear vision of the library's future, developed collaboratively with faculty. (Heeks, 1993)

School libraries have met success in new situations. In a grant maintained school (similar to U.S. charter schools) the librarian described how a new budgeting plan was put in place to totally renovate the library. The school library was targeted as having a key role to play in raising academic standards across the curriculum. The library was equipped with books, tapes, journals, software, CD-ROMs and videos. The library was organized to deliver high quality services to support the National Curriculum, GCSE and A level teaching, as well as reading for enjoyment. The library is part of marketing the school to parents and prospective pupils, and has met with success. (Larkworthy, 1993)

### Observations at Schools.

During my year in England I became involved as a volunteer at the two schools my children attended in Guildford. School A, is an older school, with a smaller enrollment, for Year 8 through Year 12, (ages 12 through 16) and A level programs, called Sixth Form, from the old numbering system, for students ages 16 through 18. School A had just changed its status from being part of the Local Education Authority to a Grant Maintained school. It is state supported. School B includes the same age group. The building is newer and can accommodate more students than are currently enrolled. It is a Church of England secondary

school open to the public in the voluntary aided school category getting state support and some money from the Diocese of Guildford.

The library at School A is in a crowded room, on the main floor near administrative offices and the school lunch room. There are about 11,000 books in the collection. There are 770 students enrolled. The budget is more than half of the Library Association's recommended 10 pounds budgeted per student per year, and seating almost meets the recommended 1 per 10 pupils. The main area seats 46 students at tables, with 3 seats available by the computer. There is a Sixth Form library in another room with its own book collection, and seating for 20 students. The main part of the library is crowded during morning and noon breaks. The Sixth Form room is used primarily as a study room. Students are free to use the books there for their assignments, but most students use their own textbooks and work on homework. According to the librarian's statistics the number of books checked out per week is 150, much higher than average. Plans for a new library in the classroom wing are underway. The library will be adjacent to the computer room. Students ask frequent assignment related reference questions, about 80 per week, according to statistics kept. Most books checked out are nonfiction, for assignments. Not all students come to the library to study. The librarian at school A has to deal with overly chatty and disruptive students, but the students mind her when told to get back to work.

There is one computer with 3 CD-ROM indexes available for students to use. Three students can sit beside the computer at one time, but only one database can be used at a time. Students use the CD-ROM for assignments, but many enjoy playing around with the new toy, looking up subjects in the encyclopedia on their own. Students do check out fiction for pleasure reading, and some assignments, but most books checked out are nonfiction. The library collection includes 66% of the titles from the National Curriculum Reading List for ages 12- 16.

The library at school B has a similar space allotment, with seating at 52 students at tables, and study carrels by the reference books. The library is in the upstairs part of the computer classrooms wing. There are 1200 students enrolled, so the seating is far below the recommended 1 for every 10 students.

There are about 12,000 books in the

collection, but many are out of date. CD-ROMs and computer software are housed in the nearby computer room, and students are encouraged to use them for assignments. The library budget has been sacrificed to meet financial constraints, due to falling enrollments over the last three years. Some improvements have been made in the computer center. A local grant was awarded to the school to build up the Information Technology area, and plans are being made to improve the library. (Unfortunately turned down in October, 1993) Enrollment is up by 20% for the next school term, 1993-94. The budget for library books is barely 10% of the Library Association's recommended 10 pounds per pupil, even with gifts from the Parent's Association. Expenditures for computer software is not included in the library's budget.

CD-ROM indexes are part of the adjacent computer center, and a special grant has allowed them to buy software. Instructional Technology is focused at the computer room. Since there are 15 terminals in the room, several databases can be viewed by many students at the same time. This activity is geared to assignments, so students are not as likely to play around with the computer on their own free time, because the computers are also used for classes and assignments.

An alcove of two tables is reserved for 6th formers, with books set aside for assignments. About 16 6th formers are regular library visitors. They complete their homework, using their textbooks, even photocopies of articles given to them by the teacher. These students rarely use the 6th form library books. The lower year students use the library for assignment based reading, looking up articles in the encyclopedias, and specific reference books. The library is crowded during break time and lunch time. Many students come in to socialize, or finish uncompleted homework. Disruptive students will quiet down, or leave when reminded about using the library for studying; but some need frequent reminders. During class time, students come in pairs or small groups to work on class assignments, with the teacher's permission. Students check out an average of 50 books per week, mostly nonfiction for assignment related work. Students usually come to the library discouraged, and don't expect to find books on their subjects. Fiction books are checked out by an enthusiastic few. Statistics were not kept on reference questions, but I observed that the students

asked location type questions--such as where are the encyclopedias, where are books on animals, etc. for assignments. The school has a copy of 62% of the titles on the National Curriculum Reading List, for ages 12 - 16.

Teachers and staff interviewed agreed with the concept of a National Curriculum. Complaints arose with the constant requirement of recording results, assessments, and exams. There seems to be no time left for teaching. One teacher was critical of the whole idea of testing. He said that the National Curriculum exams set too many students up for failure. He has seen many of the students he teaches give up trying. He is able to modify the main course he teaches into modular units. The students complete each segment, and their grades are based on course work. He says that because of the nature of his subject, the students are not asked to use the library frequently. He involves them in hands on activities, and relates the subject to current events.

Teachers, librarians, and administrators were interviewed at each school, when available. Their opinions and descriptions of the library and the National Curriculum were almost interchangeable for each school. Neither school had a whole school policy on a curriculum for information skills. Teachers in both schools stated their specific *IT* module, required at Key Stage 3, for Year 9 students, age 14. The assessments are done by the subject teachers, for a specific assignment. The time for *IT* is carved out of the English and science courses, but in the future, more time will be taken from math and foreign language as well. The strands for *IT* must include the following: Communicating information; Handling information; Measurement and control; Modelling; and Applications and effects. (*National Curriculum for English*, 1990) The work is kept in a portfolio with an account of what the student has done. There should be a minimum of twelve pieces of work, in three different subject areas. Examples of *IT* work can include the following: A print-off from a CD-ROM encyclopedia; map making from a computer program; desk top publishing example for English; spreadsheets for mathematics; micro-electronic measurements in science; electronic mail in foreign language; digital sequences on computer for music. Although this outline is merely a suggestion, it is a pattern adhered to by most students and teachers trying to keep to a schedule, and complete their tasks for the National Curriculum.



When asked if there was a plan for use of the library and help for students in acquiring the necessary skills for study and learning, the teachers all reiterated the activities of the *IT* unit. Both schools had a general introduction to the library for new students, in year 8 (age 13) English classes. In School A, students had activity work sheets. Students in Lower 6th Form (age 16-17) came with their Tutor Groups (homeroom classes), for a single session on where to find things in the library. School B gave the new students a general tour of the library and the computer center in English class. Students in Year 8, the first year of this school, had a short unit on study skills with their Tutor Group teacher. The evaluation of students' work is all based on their courses. There is no evaluation on the process for finding information. Everyone interviewed mentioned that the National Curriculum's emphasis on testing, and record keeping was a problem. Teachers are so concerned about tests, and student's measured performance, they feel the learning process is ignored.

When subject teachers were asked if they incorporated teaching information skills as part of their subjects, reactions were mixed. The teacher of English felt that she hardly had enough time to teach the required parts of her subject. Students from her class came into the library searching for biographical material on authors. All of them knew how to use the general encyclopedia, but had to be made aware of biographical dictionaries, and reference books in literature. Her students did practice using some information skills, even though she may not have emphasized it. Traditionally, English teachers have had information skills as a natural part of their subject, but in this curriculum, students are kept very busy reading and writing in their assigned texts.

The librarian at one school said she was pleasantly surprised that the music teacher had her students do a lot of reading and research on composers and music styles, so she was happy to buy books on the subject. Another teacher said that his subject was practical, and hands-on related, so students didn't use the library much for his class. He had eloquent ideas about the library's possibility as a resource center for the whole school. The ideal of independent learning would be well served by adequate multimedia resources, including computers. He would like to see his non-academic students learn to use a resource center type library for their practical skills style of learning

--finding newspaper and magazine articles about current topics, discussing social issues. The library does not have enough new material to keep up with students interests. School B is on its way, with plans for improving the facilities, but much needs to be done. Another teacher felt that the library could become a true resource center for independent learning, and endorsed the concept. He added wryly, that the National Curriculum is so tied up with testing and recording, that independent learning is not valued. Teaching and evaluation is always geared to the National tests.

Neither school had a formal way to monitor how well the library met the curriculum needs of the school. The *Reading List for the Nation's Children* which was published in January and April, 1993, was one tool. The recommended reading lists have been changed so frequently, that teachers did not regard the list as very important to their subject teaching. Other methods followed to make sure materials met curricular needs include asking for requests for titles at staff and departmental meetings, checking the course syllabus, responding to requests. Since School A had a larger budget, they were able to buy more books.

Asked whether or not they felt there was a strong link between library/information skills, i.e. reading widely, using appropriate reference sources, and performance on standardized tests, the reaction was mixed. One school administrator did not think so, another did. One teacher said that his students were not required to use the library much for his class because of the nature of the subject. Another teacher said that she did not send her students to the library for related assignment work because she knew the library did not have much to offer. She often suggested that they use the public library. Administrators and teachers said that the library should be a central resource for the whole school, and materials should be added to make it a true resource center. One librarian commented on the fact that the top students rarely visited the library. They had a lot going for them, with help at home, they completed their assignments on time, so they did not dash into the library during breaks or lunch time to complete homework assignments. The good students were busy with clubs and school activities, which met during the lunch break, and the social chatterers, and those too disorganized to complete their homework beforehand came to the library during free periods. It seemed to her



that the top students did very well without using the library. Let us assume that these students learned on their own to read widely, look up information from a wide variety of sources, including computer databases, etc. This comment was made as a criticism of the library's lack of resources, not how unnecessary the library is. The librarian at school B also felt that the school's top pupils did not use the library often for the same reasons.

One administrator felt that student work on projects was linked to high performance on tests. Projects did not have to be library based, but students had to work independently. Most librarians would like to be able to say that the better equipped a library is, the better students perform on nationalized tests. This idea is one that makes sense, but is hard to prove. The National Curriculum stresses testing, and evaluation of a student's performance against the standards outlined in the National Curriculum. Several teachers preferred the independent learning approach, but taught their subjects in the test oriented method of the National Curriculum.

### Conclusion:

*The National Curriculum for English* promotes traditional British literature. Options are available to include literature from other cultures as well. Students are offered a comprehensive reading list through all school years. Exams and Key Stage assessments prescribe a certain amount of literature. Reading also includes library and information skills to be taught through the grades. National assessment for these skills is not standardized, since the subject is not clearly defined, and is embedded within required subjects. The Library Association has summarized the information skills which form the basis of the new curricula: Planning, locating and gathering, selecting and appraising, organizing and recording, communicating and realizing, evaluating. The library can be used as the center for providing the resources for learning these skills. Practicing and learning these skills can be difficult when there are not enough books, or media or indexes on the subjects for a student's assignment or personal interests. The schools observed in Guildford are well respected secondary schools, but both are short on materials for the library. Teachers and students carry on, and students score well on the national tests.

The National Curriculum requires a school to focus on exactly what its curricular

needs will be. When problems of assessment and the workload appropriate for certain age groups is ironed out, schools can plan appropriate schemes of work. This careful organization allows the library to spend its money on materials that will be used. No more books purchased on worthy subjects which will sit on the shelf. Library purchases in the future must be justified for in depth study for some class. Books and library resources can be geared for specific reading assignments. I hope that along the way, students will find books and materials to read for pleasure.

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